10 STATEMENT FLOWERS FOR ANY GARDEN

Birds&Blooms® extra!

Beauty in Your Backyard and Beyond

HAIRY WOODPECKER

MAKE IT!
A FRESH WAY TO DISPLAY HOUSEPLANTS

BUCKET LIST BLOOMS
10 TRAVEL IDEAS FOR NATURE LOVERS

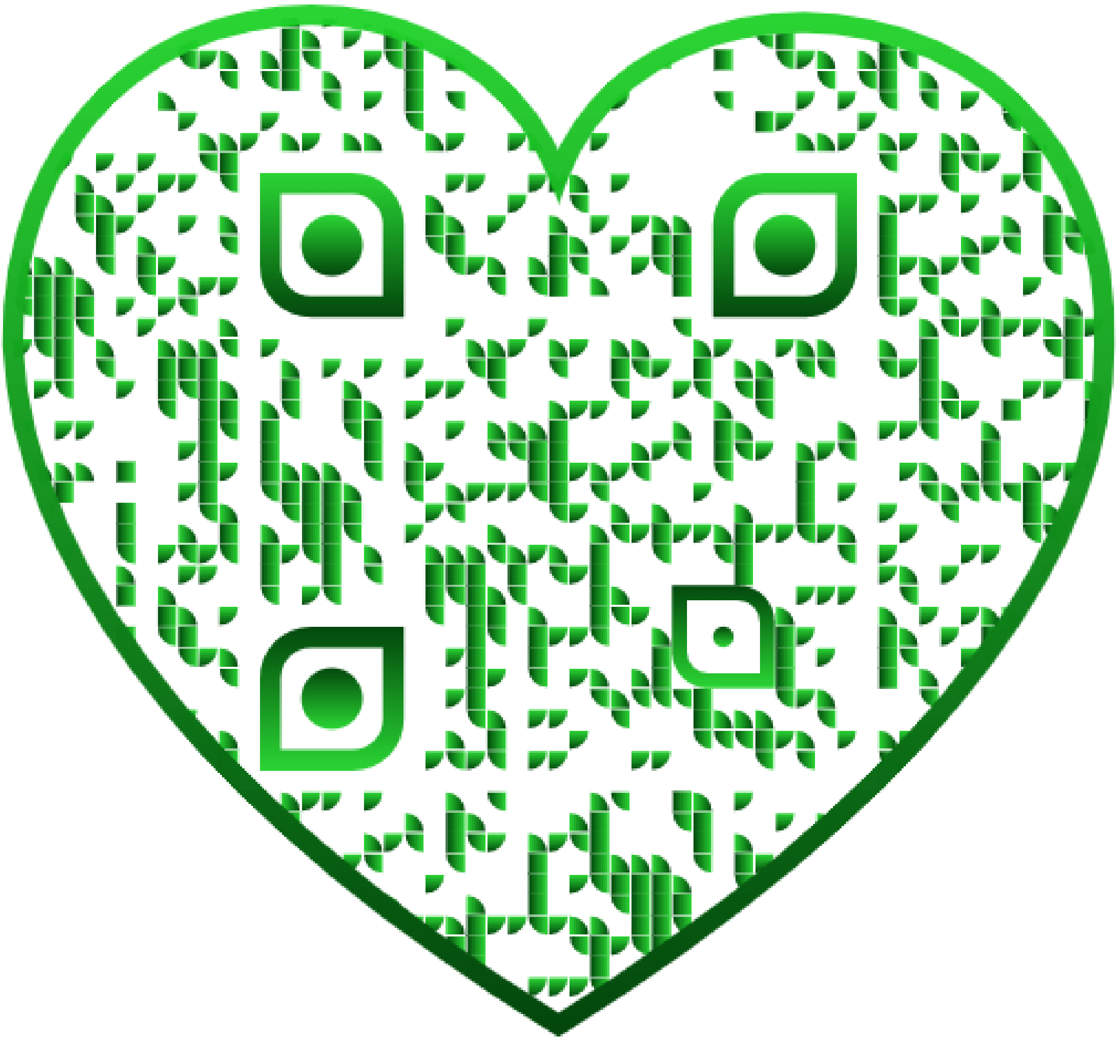
THINK SPRING
WITH CLASSIC SIGNS OF THE SEASON

HOW TO
CREATE A BIRD-FRIENDLY BACKYARD

AMERICA'S *no.*1 Bird & Garden MAGAZINE

30+ SURPRISING BIRD FACTS

FEBRUARY EXTRA 2025



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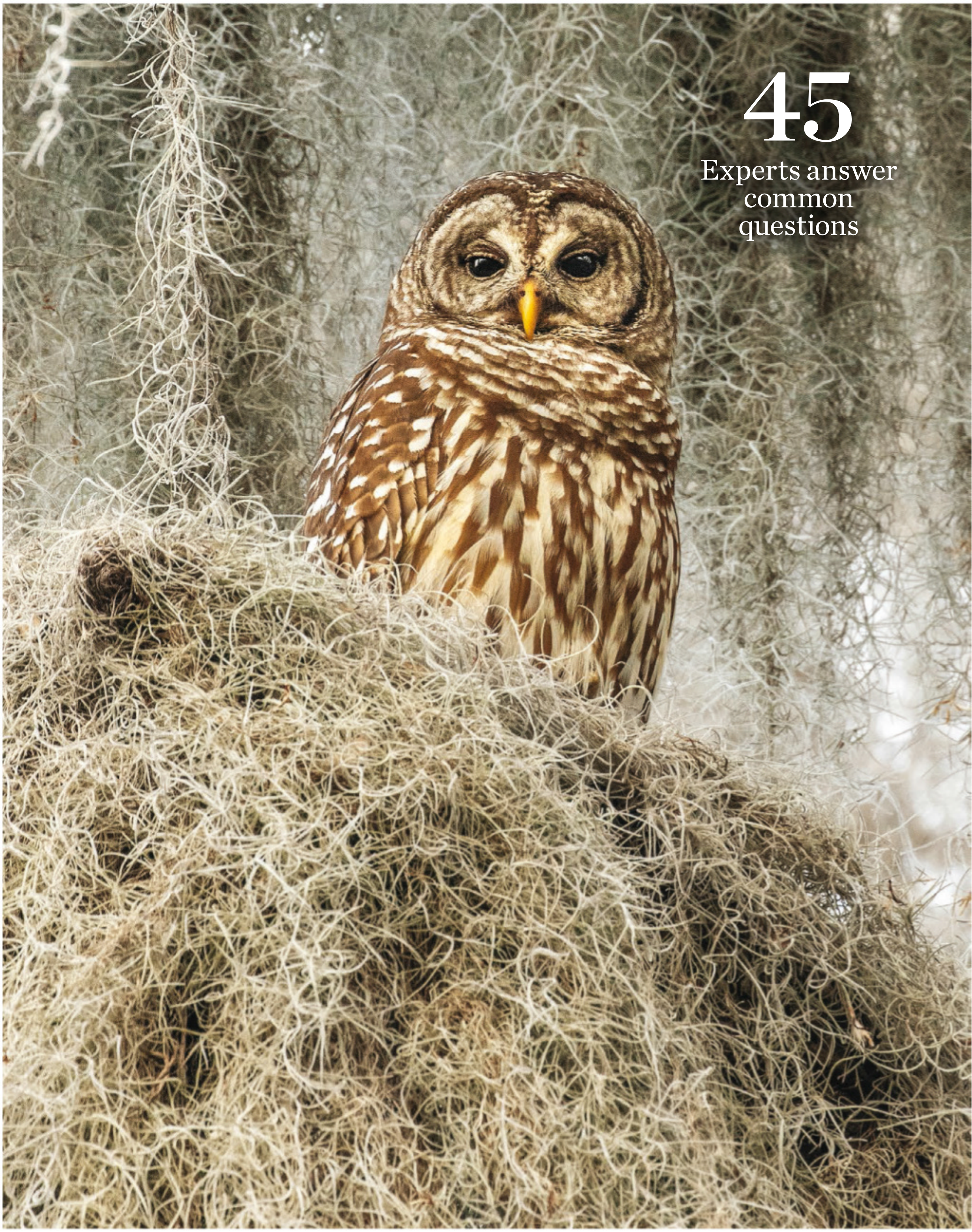

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Hairy woodpecker
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FROM THE EDITOR

The More You Know

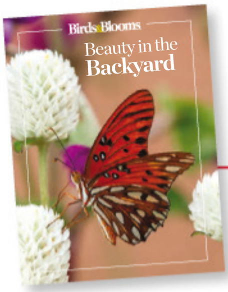
One of the best parts of my job is that I'm always learning something new. Whether it's adding a destination to my travel bucket list—I first read about Mohonk Mountain House, a resort in New York, in "Floral Getaways" on page 38—or finally understanding the different characteristics of eastern and western tiger swallowtails (page 50), the learning never stops.

But it's the amazing bird trivia in this issue that surprised me most. Birds are incredible creatures. Different species have different ways of looking for food, staying safe from predators and even communicating. Have you ever wondered why American bitterns are so loud? Or why birds migrate in spring and fall? Find the answers to these questions and more in "Bizarre Bird Facts" on page 26.

I'd love to hear about what you learned in this issue. Send me a quick note at *birdsandblooms.com/submit*.

Kirsten

KIRSTEN SCHRADER, CONTENT DIRECTOR



READ NOW!

Find joy and inspiration in our new book *Beauty in the Backyard*. In it, you'll find helpful tips and advice for making the most of your backyard. Buy it for only $10 at *birdsandblooms.com/BB2502EP*.

NEST BOX SUCCESS STORY

After reading about the decline of American kestrels, we built a nest box for them. Just days after putting the box up, a pair claimed it. The first season we had four fledglings, and in 2024 we had five!

Jennifer Sigmon
OGDENSBURG, NY

CELEBRATING SPRING

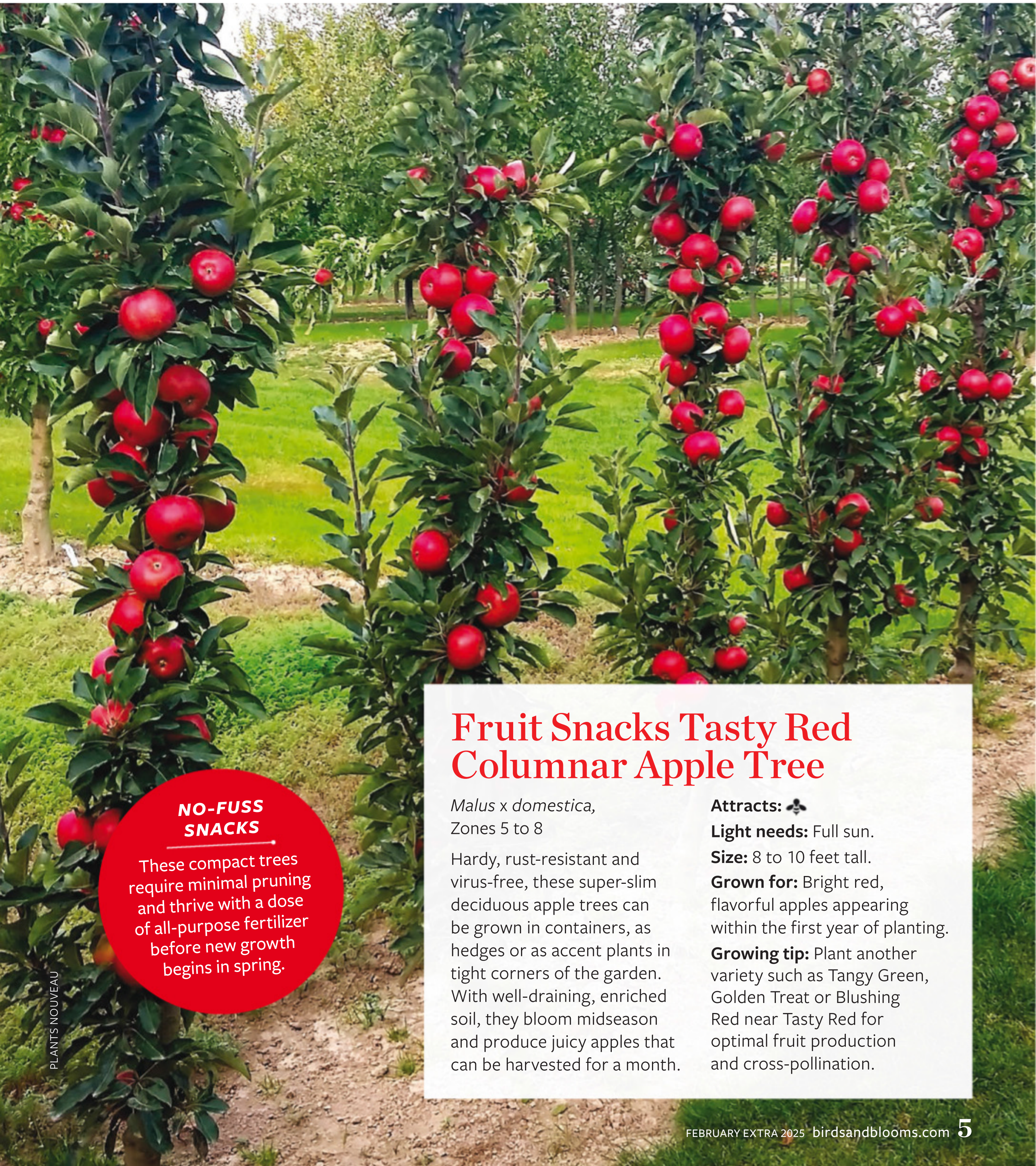
The beginning signs of life in spring bring color, texture and vibrancy to a winter palette of orange, red, brown and gray. Each blossom is a breath of life awakening from a long and dreary winter. The plants and wildlife emerging with curiosity, to discover that spring has sprung; the birds singing, squirrels chasing, bees buzzing, and plant life stretching its arms to hug the sunshine as it creeps its warm smile through the clouds—it's all a reminder that everything still grows when times get dark and cold. Welcome, spring! We have been expecting you, and we welcome you with open arms and open hearts. **Brien Straub** FRANKLIN, VA

Tulip by
Michael Mindel
LOUISVILLE, KY

birdsblooms @birdsblooms birdsblooms @birdsblooms

Growing Up

This low-maintenance apple tree is perfect for compact spaces



PLANTS NOUVEAU

NO-FUSS SNACKS

These compact trees require minimal pruning and thrive with a dose of all-purpose fertilizer before new growth begins in spring.

Fruit Snacks Tasty Red Columnar Apple Tree

Malus x *domestica*,
Zones 5 to 8

Hardy, rust-resistant and virus-free, these super-slim deciduous apple trees can be grown in containers, as hedges or as accent plants in tight corners of the garden. With well-draining, enriched soil, they bloom midseason and produce juicy apples that can be harvested for a month.

Attracts: 🐝

Light needs: Full sun.

Size: 8 to 10 feet tall.

Grown for: Bright red, flavorful apples appearing within the first year of planting.

Growing tip: Plant another variety such as Tangy Green, Golden Treat or Blushing Red near Tasty Red for optimal fruit production and cross-pollination.

Male hairy woodpecker

A Striking Favorite

Hairy woodpeckers bring flashes of black and white to your backyard **BY KELSEY ROSETH**

Attracting a hairy woodpecker to your yard can be a challenge compared to attracting its more common look-alike, the downy woodpecker, but the bright, bold beauties are found across the continent and are worth looking for.

Spot the Hairy

Hairy woodpeckers choose habitats with tall trees. They are found in pine-hardwood forests and bald cypress swamps, as well as riverine and coniferous forests. These birds also make appearances in woodlots, suburbs, cemeteries, pine-oak woodlands and recently burned forests.

Remarkable Range

While downy woodpeckers live only north of the Mexican border, hairy woodpeckers are permanent residents from Alaska and Canada all the way south through the mountains of Mexico and Central America to western Panama.

Black-and-White Beauties

Like its smaller cousin the downy woodpecker, this bird is smartly patterned, with a white belly, a white patch down the center of the back, and white spots on its black wings. Hairy woodpeckers in the West have smaller and fewer white spots than those in the East. "Its head is a collage of black slits near the eye, with black on the crown," says Keith Arnold, professor emeritus at Texas A&M University. Males also sport a small red patch on their heads.

Food in Focus

"Hairy woodpeckers are omnivorous. They eat mostly insects, particularly insects that are boring into trees," Keith says.

Hairies feed on soft-bodied bugs in tree trunks and fallen logs. At times, they also feed on fruit.

Nesting Habits

"It's very likely the male sets up the territory," Keith says. "Oftentimes where the male has built a cavity will be the determining factor of whether the female stays with him or keeps on looking." However, Keith adds, successful pairs may mate for life.

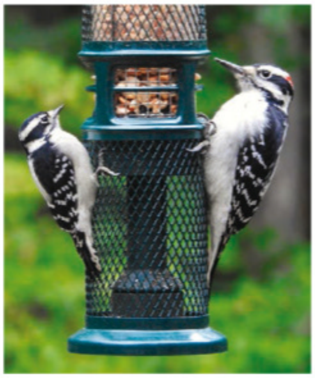
These birds create cavity nests in snags, though they also nest in dead portions of living trees.

The Downy Difference

Although this bird is at least 25% larger than the downy woodpecker, the difference isn't obvious when they're not together. Instead, look at the bill: short and stubby on the downy, long and chisel-shaped on the hairy. Finally, check the tail. Both have black central tail feathers and white outer ones, but on the downy woodpecker those outer feathers have black spots, while they're plain white on the hairy woodpecker.

IRVING A GAFFNEY/GETTY IMAGES

THE FEED



> "These woodpeckers (downy on the left, hairy on the right) posed perfectly for several minutes, allowing me to capture this photo. The two look so similar until you see them side by side and see how their sizes compare."

Lucine Reinbold
CRANSTON, RI

FANCIFUL FLIGHT

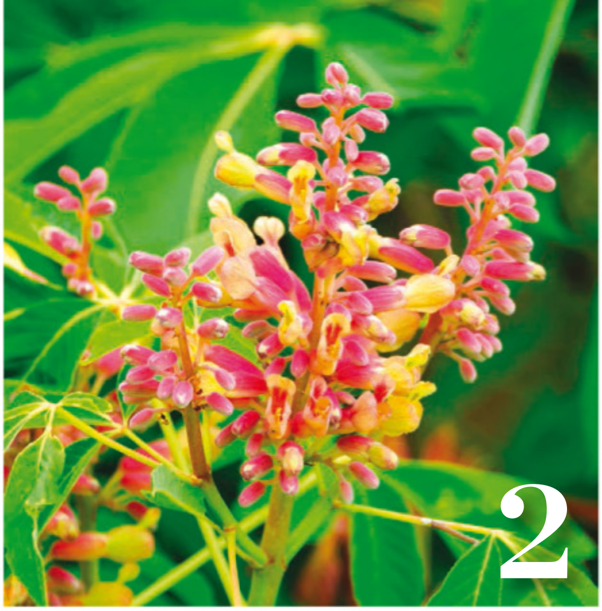
To climb trunks, the hairy leverages stiff tail feathers and a firm posture to spring upward with both feet. Its flight pattern is described as slowly undulating.

BACKYARD BECKONING

Serve standard suet to bring a beautiful hairy woodpecker to your backyard. For added fun, Keith suggests stuffing pine cones with peanut butter and seed to create a scrumptious snack.

Garden Greats

Amplify your landscape with big, bold blossoms **BY PEGGY RICCIO**



1 Fireworks clematis

CLEMATIS HYBRID,
ZONES 4 TO 8

Lilac with neon fuchsia bands, these 6-to-8-inch clematis flowers bloom in the spring and again in late summer to early fall. A tall vining plant, Fireworks, like several other clematis vines, prefers cool soil and bright light—think morning sun and afternoon shade.

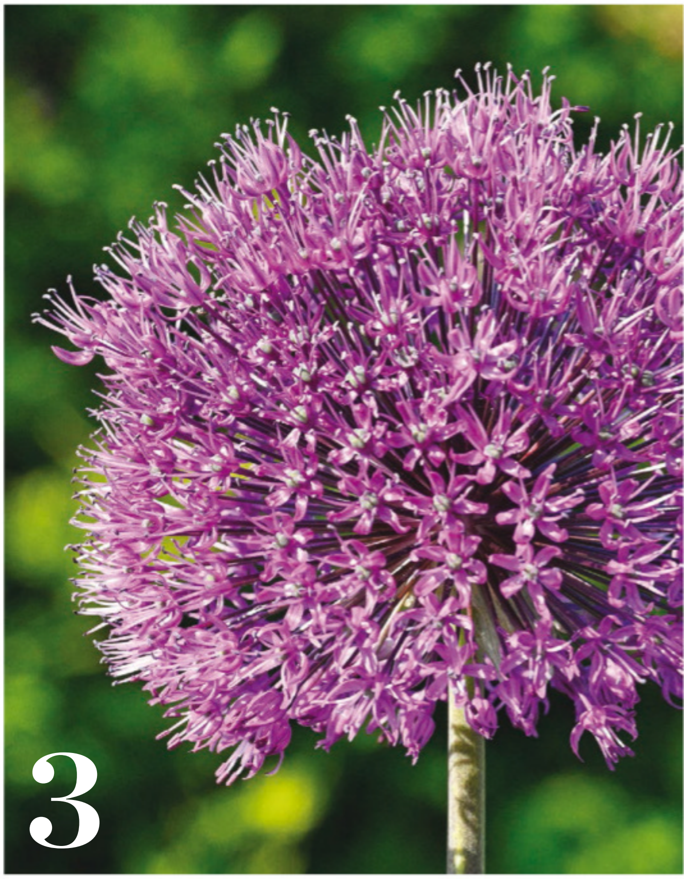
Why we love it: Fireworks' vining habit creates eye-level dramatic blooms. Plant by the front door and you can't miss it.

2 Red buckeye tree

AESCULUS PAVIA,
ZONES 4 TO 8

Red buckeye features 6-to-8-inch tall, upright panicles of tubular flowers between April and May. Hummingbirds flock to the blooms, which cover the tree in a red blaze. Preferring partial shade and moist, well-draining soil, this native is often found in woodland areas and near streams.

Why we love it: It is small enough for suburban backyards. Homeowners can enjoy viewing the red blossoms from the kitchen window.



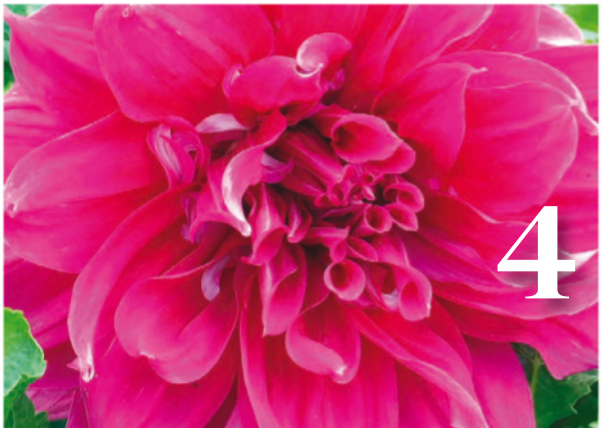
3 Gladiator allium

ALLIUM HYBRID, ZONES 3 TO 8

This ornamental onion punctuates the garden with lilac-colored, 5-inch globose flower heads on 3-to-4-foot-tall stems. In late summer to fall, the lilac fades to tan, and the globes still stand on the sturdy robust stems. Sold as a bulb, Gladiator is a full-sun perennial preferring well-draining soil.

Why we love it: Sweetly scented Gladiator makes a great cut flower for both fresh and dried bouquets.

MIX 'EM UP *Vary the sizes of your flowers! Plants with large blooms create more interest. Large-flowered plants can be seen from a distance, so place them where they can be viewed from the road, from inside your house or along the garden's perimeter.*



4 Maki dahlia

DAHLIA HYBRID, ZONES 8 TO 10

Blooming from summer to frost, Maki's 12-to-14-inch flowers have ruffled pink petals, marked with red to purple flecks. Depending on the light, the flowers appear to be pink, rose-red or rose-lilac. Stake these 4-foot-high plants in full sun and well-draining soil.

Why we love it: Maki is the focal point of any floral arrangement, blending well with other flowers.

1: PAUL WESTON, 2: BLICKWINKEL/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO (2); 3: PAUL GRACE PHOTOGRAPHY SOMERSHAM/GETTY IMAGES; 4: AMY CORTI/SHUTTERSTOCK

5 French Vanilla hardy hibiscus

HIBISCUS, ZONES 4 TO 9

Part of the Summerific line, French Vanilla has light yellow buds opening to ruffled, creamy white flowers with red eyes. This perennial shrub is relatively short, about 3 to 4 feet tall. French Vanilla blooms all summer in sun and well-draining soil.

Why we love it: The red stems and dark green foliage echo the eye-popping red centers of the cream-colored French Vanilla flowers.

6 Scheherazade Orienpet lily

LILIUM HYBRID, ZONES 4 TO 8

Scheherazade is a stately lily reaching 4 to 7 feet tall. The flower has crimson petals with white edges and a gold throat. This perennial lily blooms in mid- to late summer in full sun and rich, organic soil.

Why we love it: A cross between an Oriental for its fragrance and a Trumpet for its sturdy stems, it combines the best qualities of the two species.

7 Bigleaf magnolia

MAGNOLIA MACROPHYLLA, ZONES 5 TO 8

Similar to a southern magnolia, bigleaf magnolia produces thick, creamy white flowers—only much larger. Each blossom is 10 inches wide with six petals, three of which are marked with rosy purple at the base. Reaching 30 to 40 feet, this shade-tolerant native tree is also known for its 30-inch-long leaves.

Why we love it: It takes a single blossom in a shallow dish of water to add color and fragrance to a room.

A SMELLY AFFAIR *Corpse flower (*Amorphophallus titanum*) is one of the largest blooms in the world, reaching 10 feet. The bloom smells like rotting flesh to attract pollinators. Native to Indonesia, the plant is cultivated in gardens around the world.*

8 Bartzella peony

PAEONIA HYBRID, ZONES 4 TO 8

In the summer, Bartzella blooms double-petaled, yellow flowers marked with red flares in the center. The sweet scented, 6-to-8-inch flowers cover the shrub. It prefers full sun and well-draining soil.

Why we love it: A cross between an herbaceous and a tree peony, Bartzella performs as a compact early-season flowering shrub—no need to stake.

5, 8: WALTERS GARDENS, INC; 6: IMAGEBROKER/JUSTUS DE CUVELAND/GETTY IMAGES; 7: TIM GAINEY/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 9: ROSEMARY CALVERT/GETTY IMAGES; 10: SARYCHEVA OLESIA/SHUTTERSTOCK

9 Titan sunflower

HELIANTHUS ANNUUS, ANNUAL

Towering as high as 12 to 14 feet, Titan produces massive 2-foot-wide heads with molasses-colored faces and bright yellow petals. This fast-growing annual needs full sun, vertical support and moist, well-draining soil.

Why we love it: Titan's seeds can be saved to sow the following year or to eat as a snack.

BIG BLOOM PERKS

Use large flowers to:

- Make a statement in the garden
- Serve as a focal point
- Place in the back of the border
- Cut for large fresh arrangements
- Float in shallow water dishes
- Accentuate your kitchen window view

10 Grandise Fantasy amaryllis

HIPPEASTRUM HYBRID

Grandise Fantasy features exotic tapered ivory petals streaked with raspberry-colored veins. Before planting the bulb in a container, remember to insert a stake to support the 2-foot-tall plant.

Why we love it: This amaryllis doubles as home decor and a holiday gift. Try growing it outdoors in warm climates.

Peggy Riccio is a Virginia-based horticulturist, who spends her mornings drinking coffee while admiring the bold blossoms of her plants through the kitchen window.

Make a Kokedama Masterpiece

Bring a Japanese tradition into your home with this quick project **BY CARMEN DE LA PAZ**

ALL PHOTOS: TMB STUDIO

BEST PLANTS FOR KOKEDAMA

Choose plants that prefer part to full shade. Carmen made three kokedama balls using an elephant ear plant, a ficus tree bonsai and a ponytail palm. Here are some other plant options to consider: orchids, African violets, ivy and spider plants.

Kokedama, or "moss ball" in Japanese, involves wrapping a plant's root system in a moss-covered soil ball, resulting in a natural and visually appealing presentation.

Step 1

Mix 1 part bonsai soil, 1 part peat moss and ½ part potting soil. This combination creates good drainage and aeration, which prevents root rot, supports moisture retention and allows roots to stay moist between waterings. Add small amounts of water as you go and combine until the soil clumps together. Your soil mix is right when you press it in your hand and it stays together in a tight shape. Press and form a soil ball 5 to 6 in. in diameter.

Step 2

Clean off as much of the potting soil around the roots of your plant as possible so that you can easily tuck the root ball into the kokedama ball in the next step. Do this over a tray or bucket for easy cleanup.

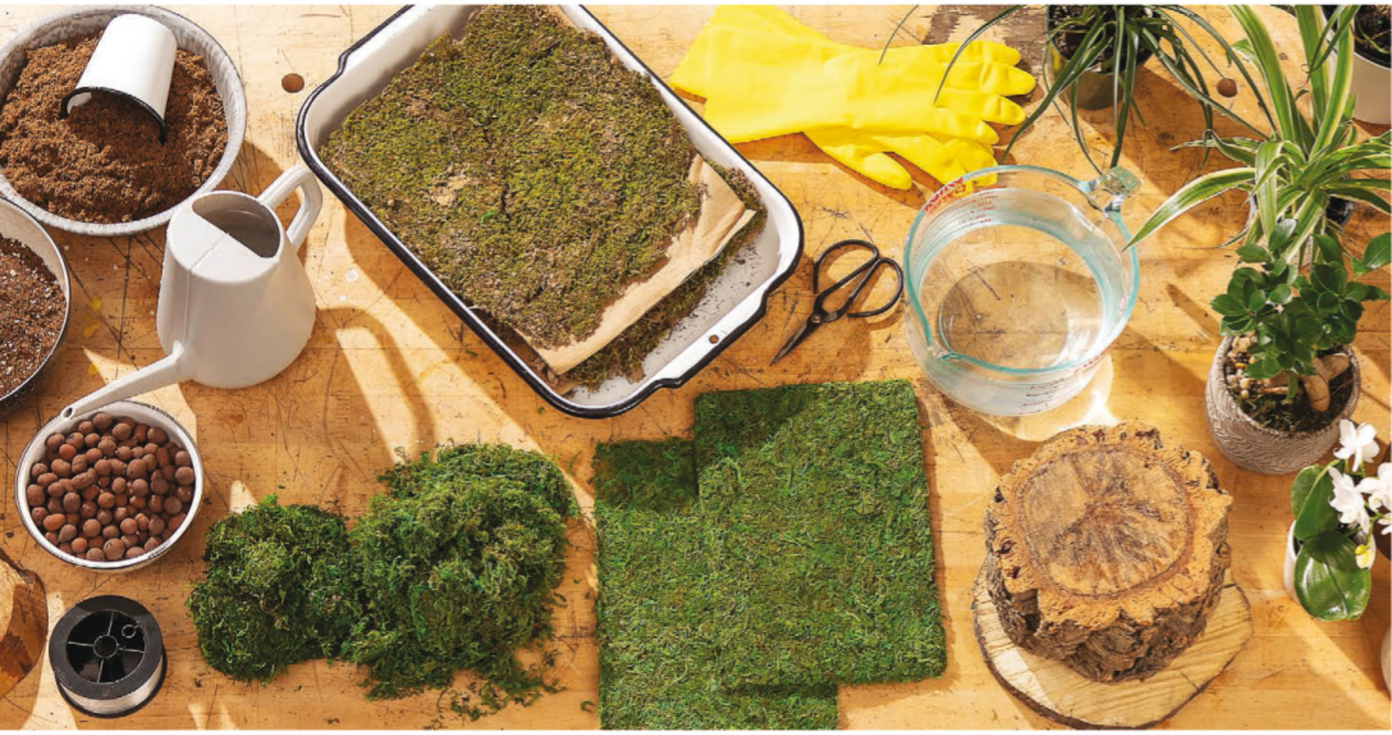
Step 3

Lay out a single layer of cheesecloth large enough to cover the entire ball. Transfer the kokedama ball to the center of the cloth. Use your hands or a trowel to gently excavate a hole large enough to accommodate the roots of your plant (and a few expanded clay pebbles) in the center of the ball. Place the plant and clay pebbles in the hole, and gently pack and compress the soil around the roots. Make sure that the roots are snug and completely covered by the soil but not so tight that they bulge out the top of the ball.

1

2

3

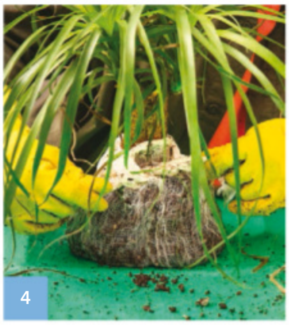


TOOLS

- Rubber gloves (optional)
- Tray or bucket
- Trowel
- Water mister

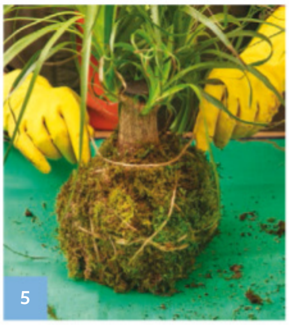
MATERIALS

- Bonsai soil
- Peat moss
- Potting mix
- Plant of choice
- Cheesecloth
- Expanded clay pebbles
- Jute twine
- Fishing line
- Moss sheets



Step 4

To help maintain the formed kokedama ball and ensure it stays snug around the plant's root ball, wrap the ball with the sheet of cheesecloth. Temporarily tie some twine around the top to secure it around the stalk of the plant. You will remove this twine later when the moss has been secured. The ball's shape does not need to be perfect at this stage.



Step 5

Before you begin to work with the moss, mist it with water to make it pliable. Cover the ball with sheets of moss, securing them with jute twine to hold the moss in place and help create the ball shape you desire. Tie knots in the twine as you see fit to draw the ball together in a nice round shape and secure the loose ends before trimming them. Remove the twine you placed around the cheesecloth in the previous step.

Step 6

Hang your masterpiece! It's optional, but you can make the kokedama appear to be floating by hanging it from a ceiling or a window with fishing line (make sure the weight rating can support your ball after a watering). Or use twine or another hanging method.

WATER MISTER: SOPHIECAT/SHUTTERSTOCK

KOKEDAMA CARE

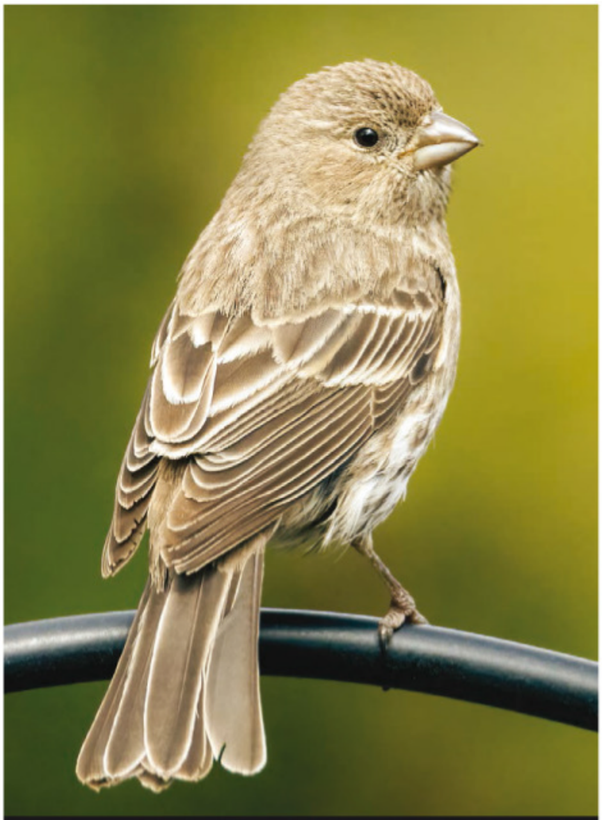
Watering: Take your kokedama ball down once or twice a week and let it soak in a tray of room temperature water. The ball will draw the water up. Take the ball out of the water and let it drain for about 30 minutes or until it stops dripping. Or, water from above with a watering can, making sure the ball is saturated. In between regular waterings, mist the leaves.

Light: If you place your kokedama where sunlight will hit it directly, filter the light through a sheer curtain or shade.

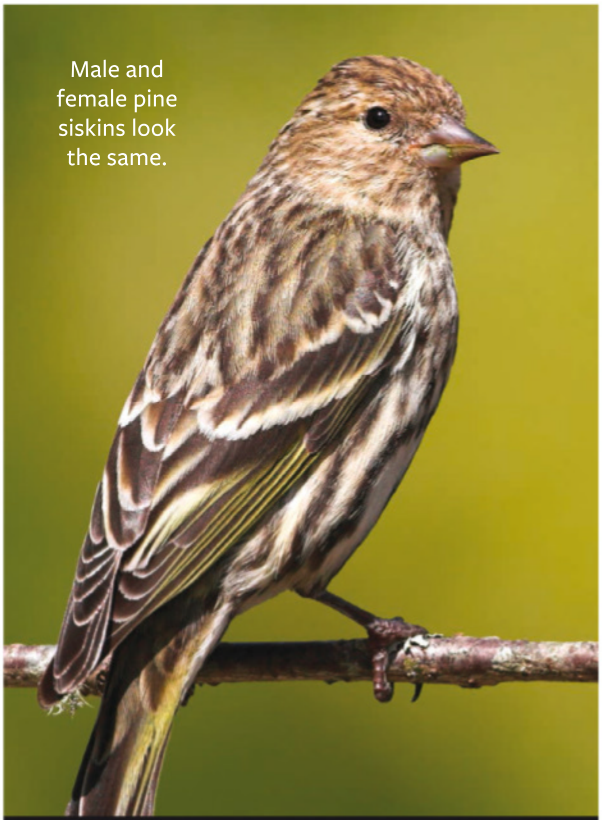
Small and Stripy

Find out whether it's a female house finch or pine siskin at your feeder

BY LISA BALLARD



Female house finch



Male and female pine siskins look the same.

Pine siskin

Female house finch

RANGE
Found year-round in the Lower 48, except for expansive grasslands.

APPEARANCE
Conical bill and notched tail. Entirely brown with blurry dark streaks that are bolder on the belly. Dark wings and tail have white edges.

SOUNDS
Mostly short, musical chirps. Females sing mainly during mating season in spring.

DIET
Feeds on seeds, tender buds and fruit, plus black oil sunflower seeds at feeders.

Pine siskin

RANGE
Year-round in Canada and parts of the West. Flocks may appear one year but not the next in the rest of the U.S., depending on seed availability.

APPEARANCE
Pointed bill is thinner than other finches. Brown with bold dark streaks all over. Yellow stripes on wings and a notched tail.

SOUNDS
Calls range from a tuneful *sweeet* to a harsh, rising *zzzzz* sound.

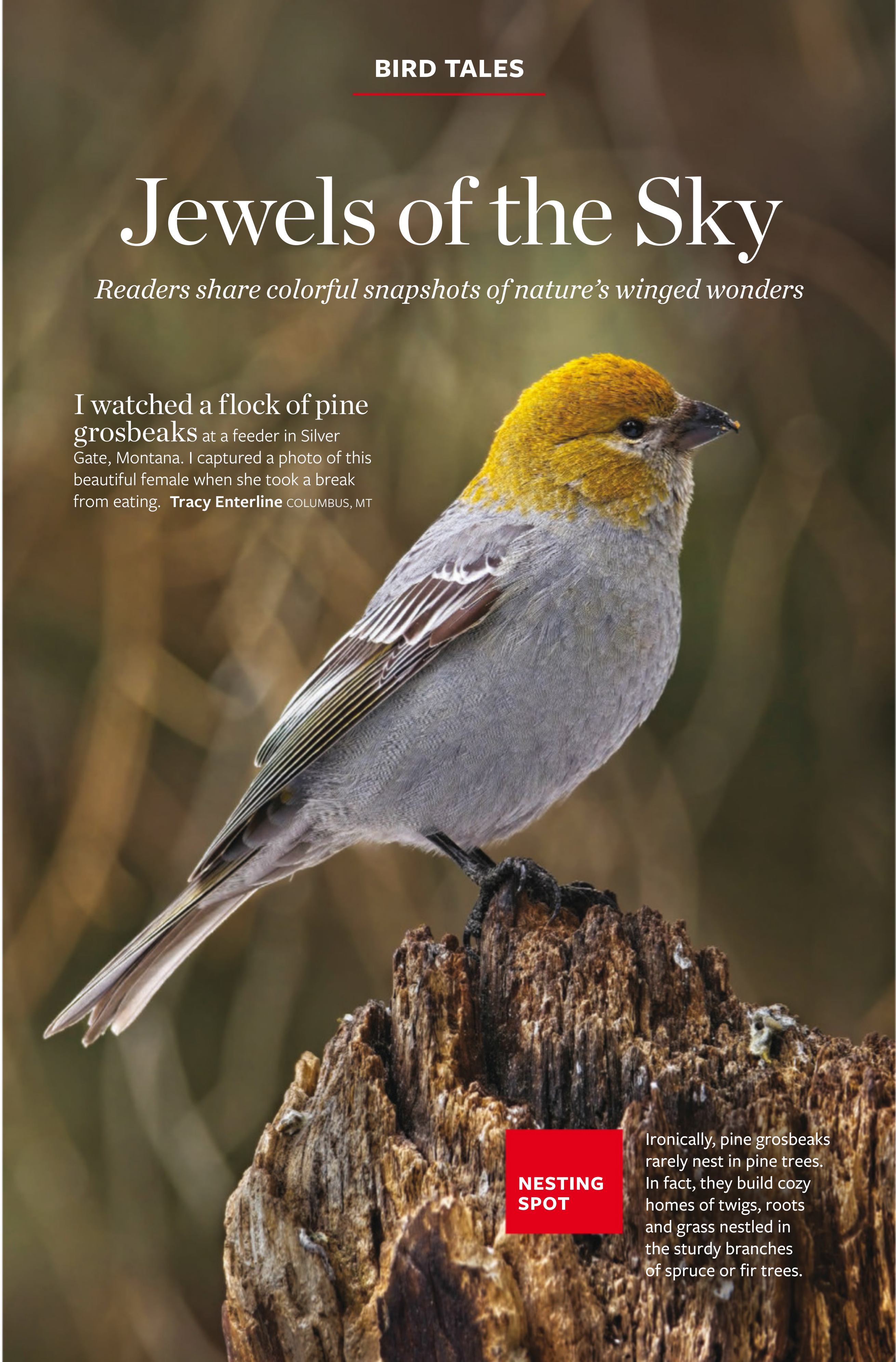
DIET
Eats seeds in the wild and thistle from feeders. Also consumes insects.

MORE ID HELP *A male house finch may also be confused with a pine siskin. Sometimes male house finches look yellow and brown, rather than red and brown, if their diet does not have much pigment in it, whereas siskins always have yellow in their plumage.*

FROM LEFT: LUC POULIOT/GETTY IMAGES; MARTIN SMART/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Jewels of the Sky

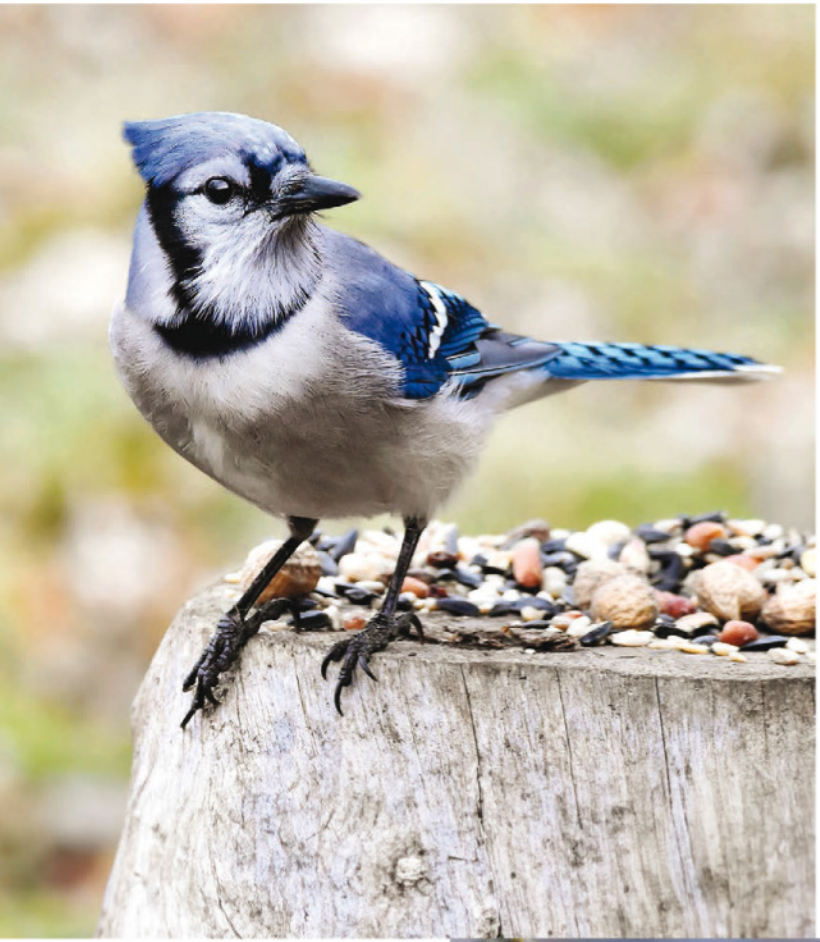
Readers share colorful snapshots of nature's winged wonders



I watched a flock of pine grosbeaks at a feeder in Silver Gate, Montana. I captured a photo of this beautiful female when she took a break from eating. **Tracy Enterline** COLUMBUS, MT

NESTING SPOT

Ironically, pine grosbeaks rarely nest in pine trees. In fact, they build cozy homes of twigs, roots and grass nestled in the sturdy branches of spruce or fir trees.



Here in the north, when it’s sometimes too cold to be outside, I like to set up natural feeding stations near the window. This blue jay kept me company by the patio door and was fun to watch and photograph. I think it knew I was there and watching.

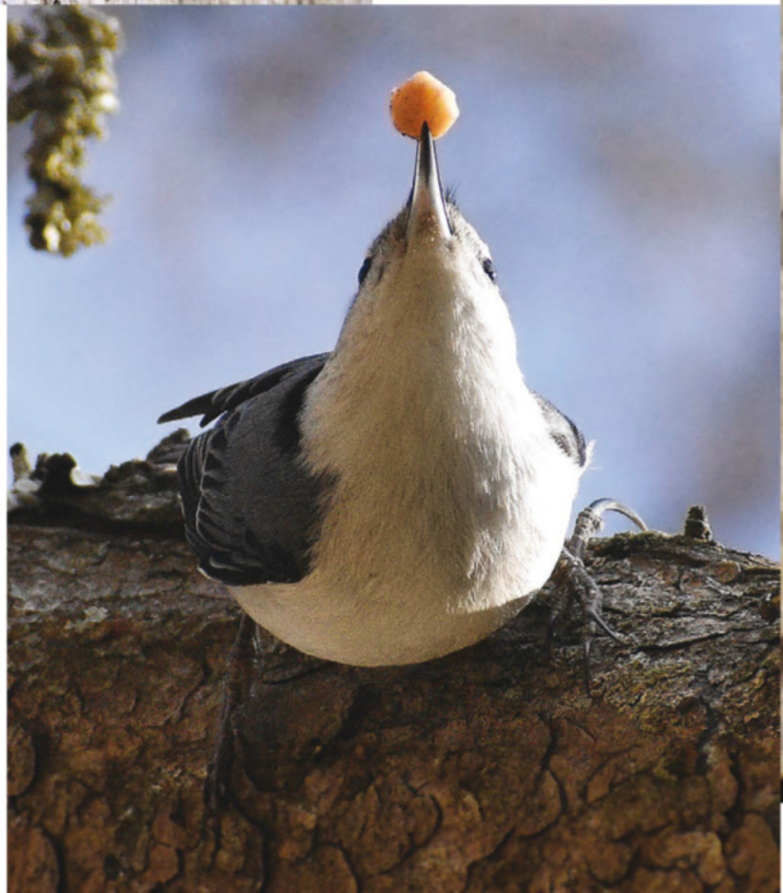
Jodi Iverson
COTTAGE GROVE, MN

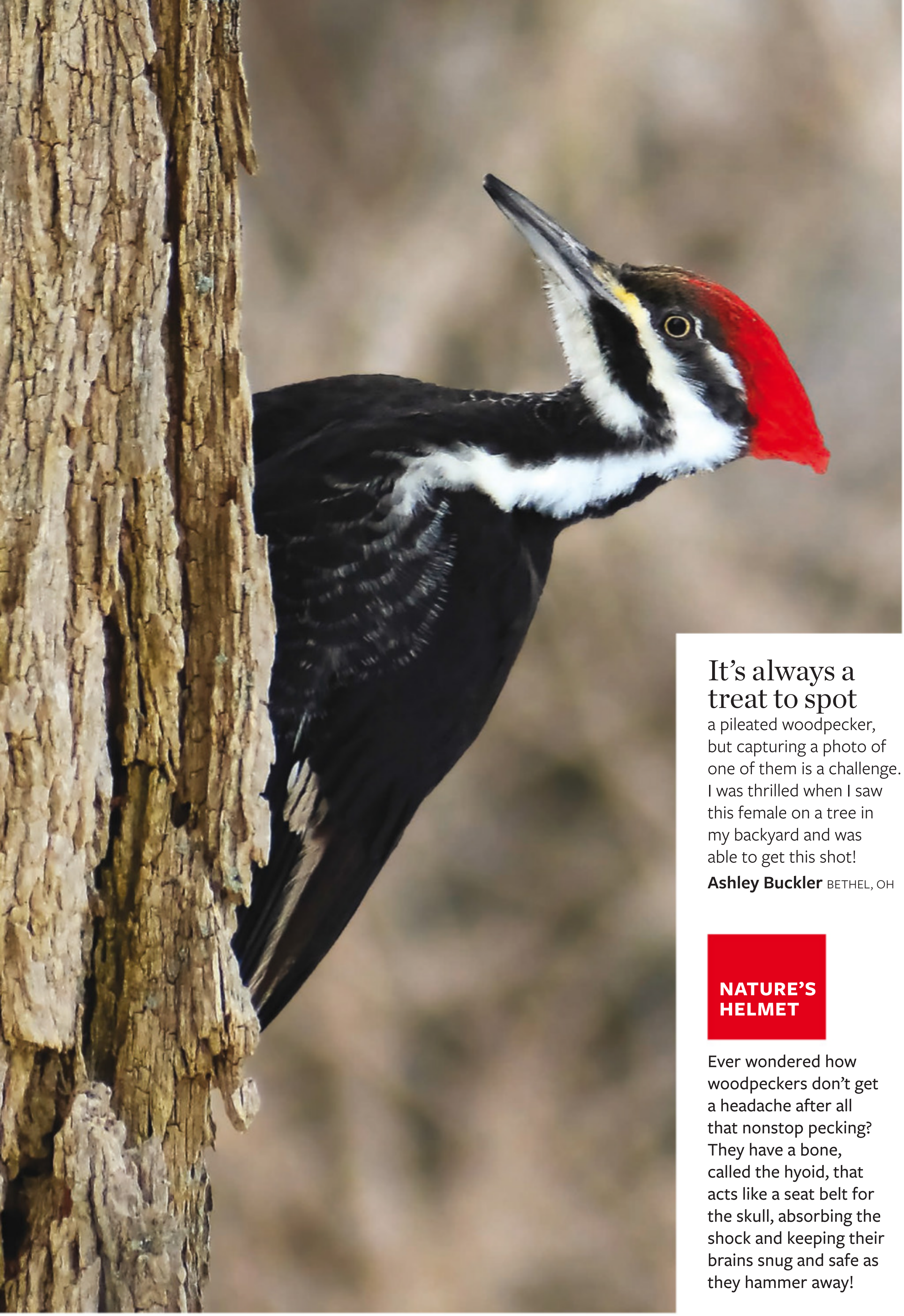
CROWNING GLORY

Blue jays have some serious communication skills! That spiky blue crest isn’t just for show—the birds use it to send signals about their mood.

While birding at my local pond, I saw several nuthatches in the pine trees. I love their song and was trying to keep up with at least one to get some pictures. Well, it paid off because this nuthatch had found itself a treat and decided to show it to me. This was at the Kenilworth Park in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. Birding is my happy place, and when I get shots like this, it makes every bit of time and patience totally worth it.

Kerry Kline POTTSTOWN, PA





It's always a treat to spot

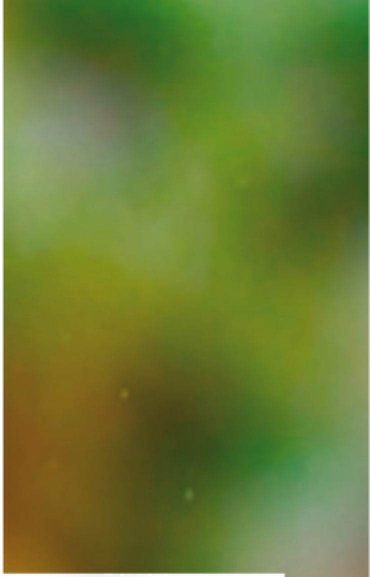
a pileated woodpecker, but capturing a photo of one of them is a challenge. I was thrilled when I saw this female on a tree in my backyard and was able to get this shot!

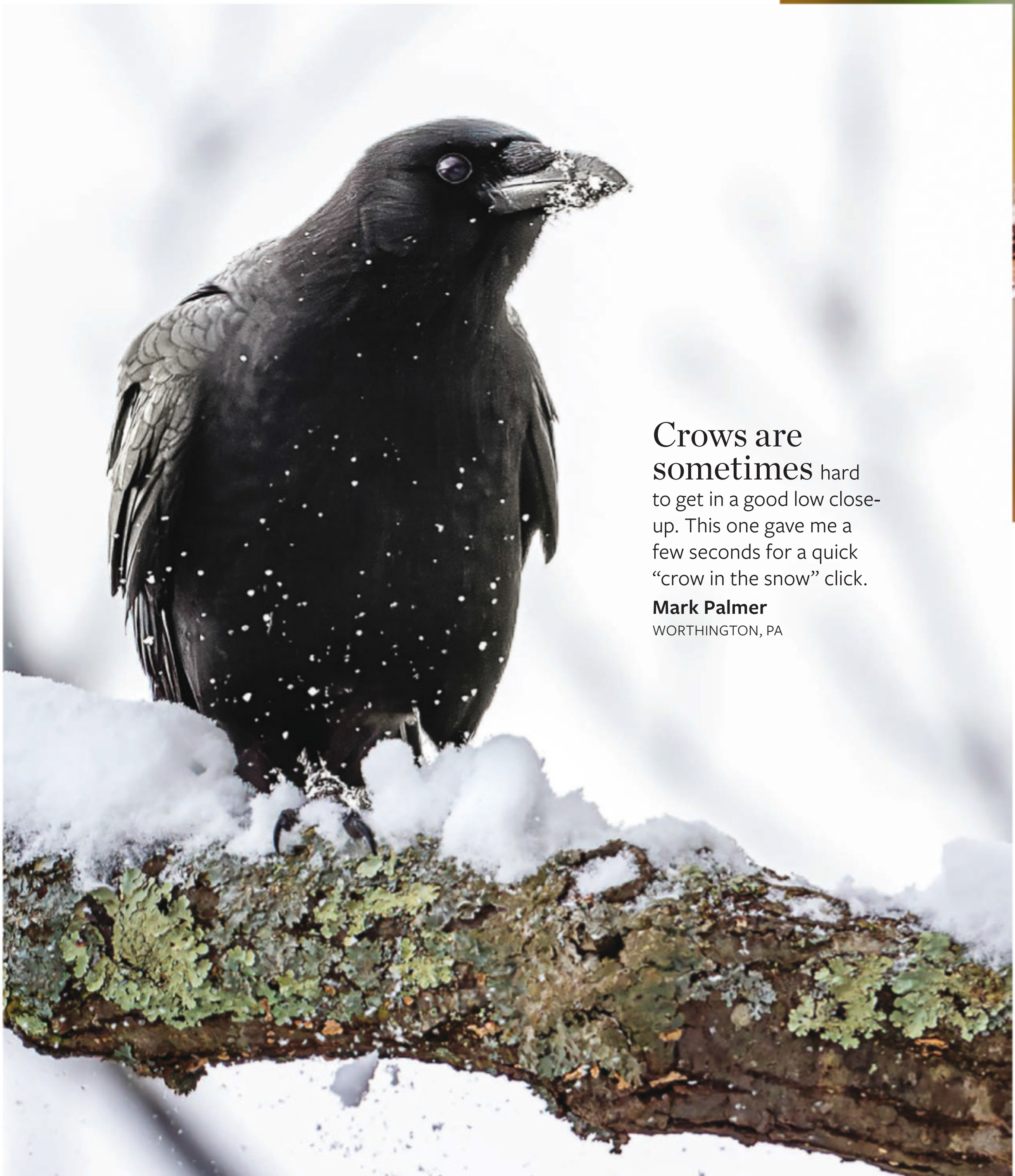
Ashley Buckler BETHEL, OH

NATURE'S HELMET

Ever wondered how woodpeckers don't get a headache after all that nonstop pecking? They have a bone, called the hyoid, that acts like a seat belt for the skull, absorbing the shock and keeping their brains snug and safe as they hammer away!

We live in the High Desert and witnessed our majestic resident great horned owl spreading his wings for liftoff. He looked as if he was soaking up every second of a magical moment! **Deborah Saldana** OAK HILLS, CA





Crows are sometimes hard to get in a good low close-up. This one gave me a few seconds for a quick "crow in the snow" click.

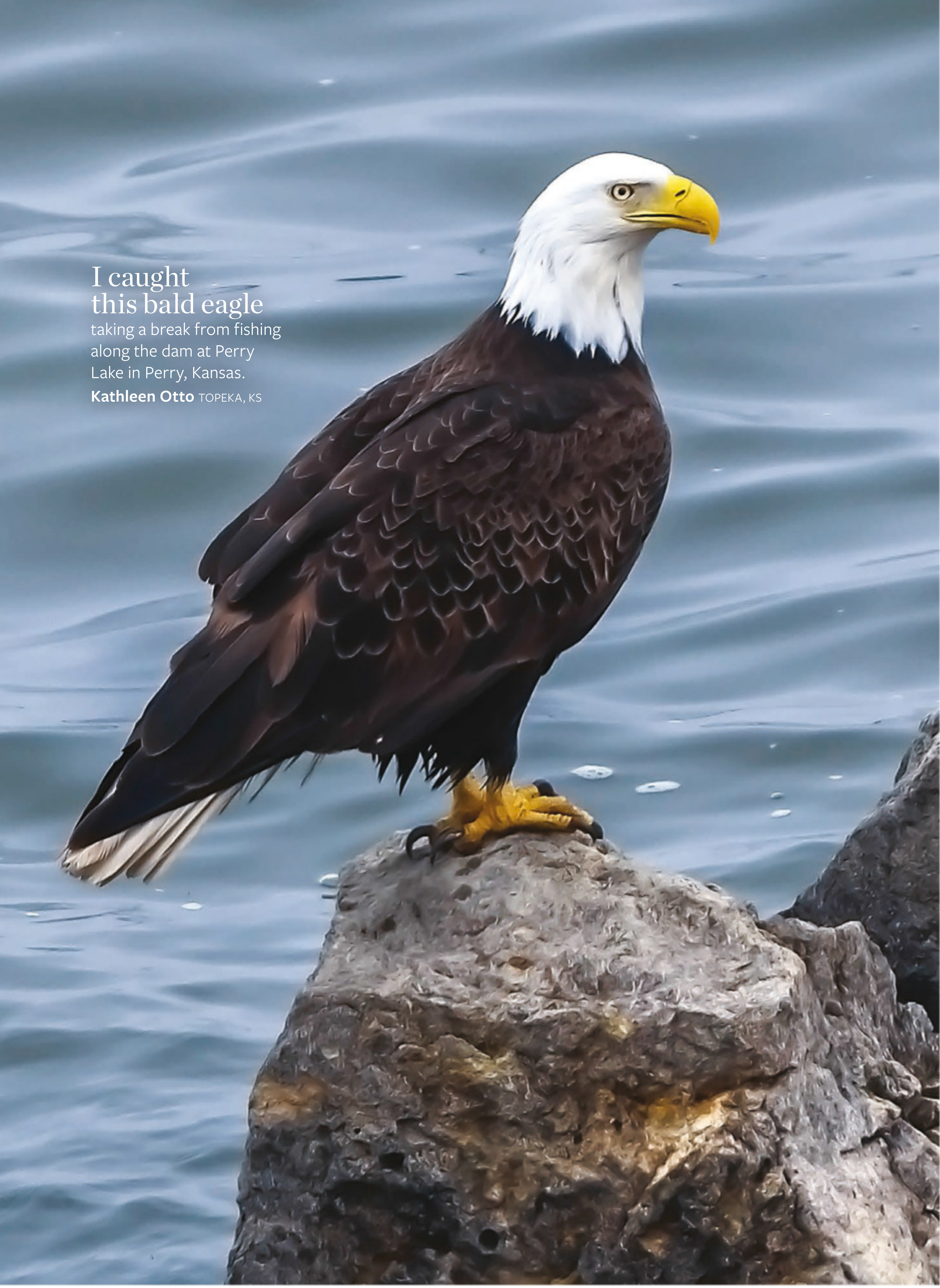
Mark Palmer
WORTHINGTON, PA

LIFELONG LOVERS

Great horned owl pairs may stay together for five years or more. Some researchers think they stick by each other's sides for life.

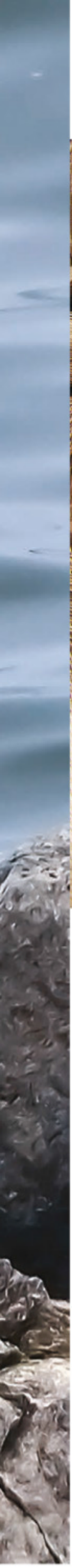
I like to photograph birds in winter when their feathers are in the best condition and puffed up to keep their bodies warm. When a northern cardinal and an American tree sparrow landed on this old stump, they seemed to be talking to each other, so I titled this image "How's your day going?" I captured this shot at Kensington Metropark, not far from my home.

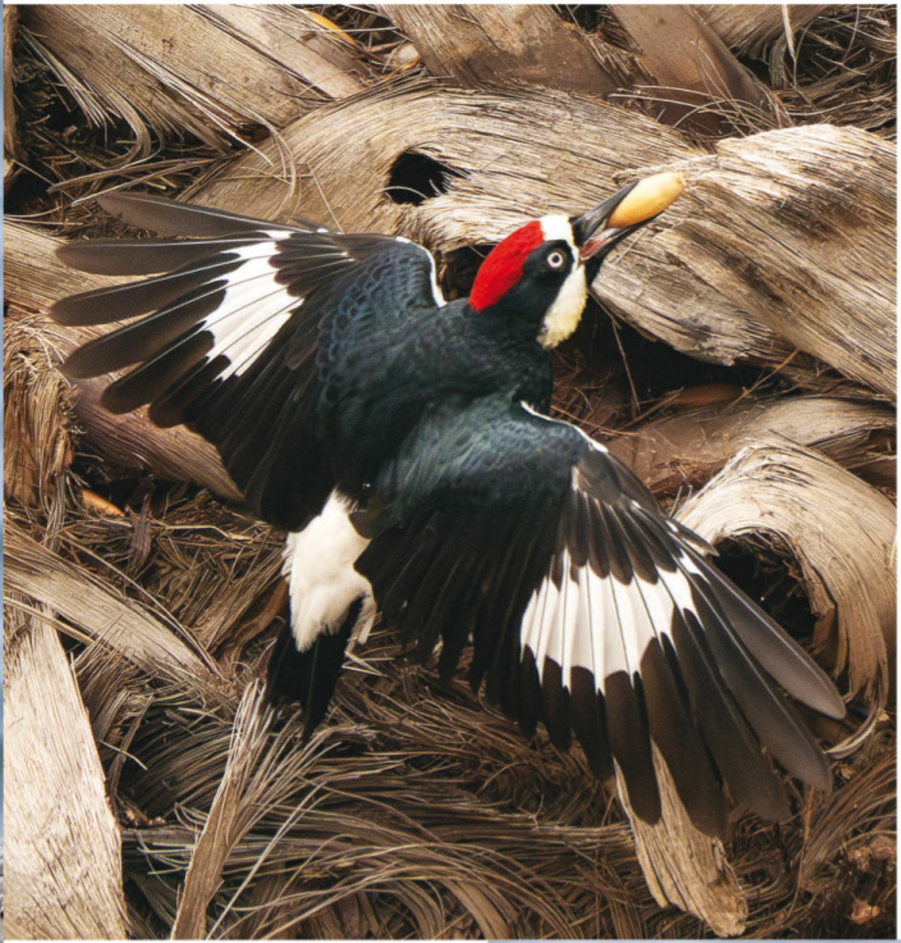
Lori Franzen ANN ARBOR, MI



I caught this bald eagle taking a break from fishing along the dam at Perry Lake in Perry, Kansas.

Kathleen Otto TOPEKA, KS

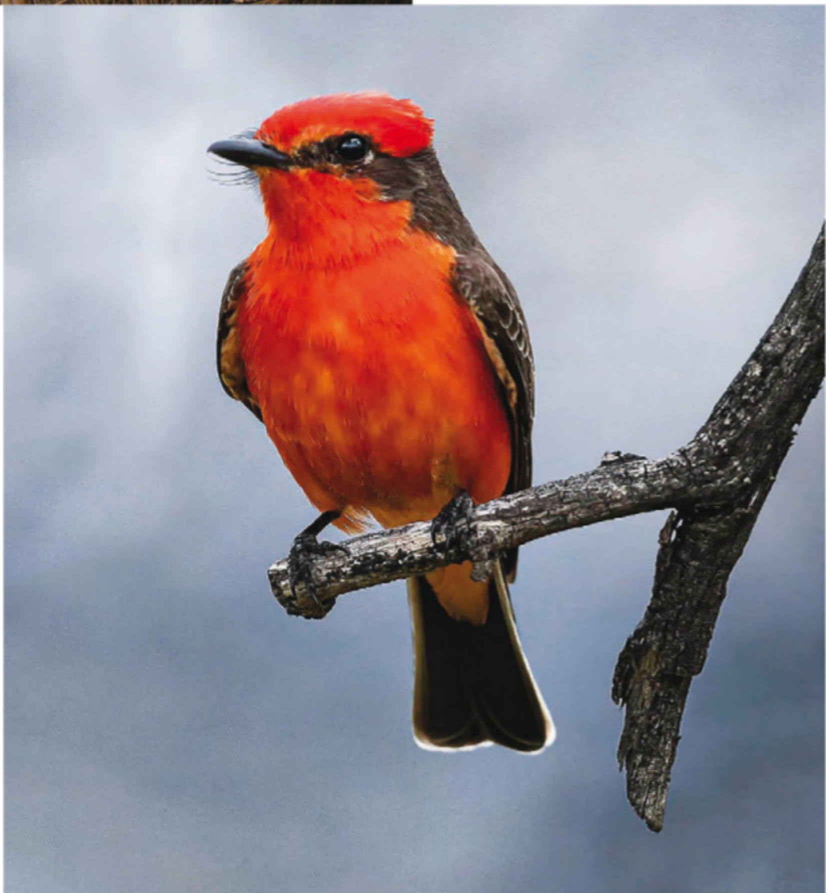




Being from the Midwest,

I was not familiar with acorn woodpeckers until I first saw them in southeastern Arizona. Since then, I've been fascinated by these industrious birds. While at the San Diego Bird Festival, I visited a park that had several acorn woodpeckers keeping their granaries in a line of palm trees. The minute I drove into the park, I could see them flying back and forth. I've since read that a family of acorn woodpeckers may use a granary for generations, with some trees holding as many as 50,000 acorns.

Linda J. Scher
MINNEAPOLIS, MN



This vermilion flycatcher

posed for my camera at the Catalina State Park in Tucson, Arizona. An easy variety to spot, this beautiful bird brightens up the park each winter.

Bruce Turnbull
PENTICTON, BC

COURTING WITH A GIFT

A male vermilion flycatcher impresses his ladylove with a flashy gift—like a butterfly or an eye-catching insect.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

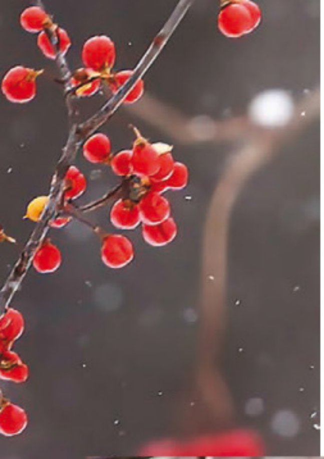
Blue jays are part of the Corvidae family—the same crew as crows and ravens! Much like their crow cousins, blue jays are super smart, eat a variety of foods, have a loud, rowdy call, and are masters at mimicking other sounds.

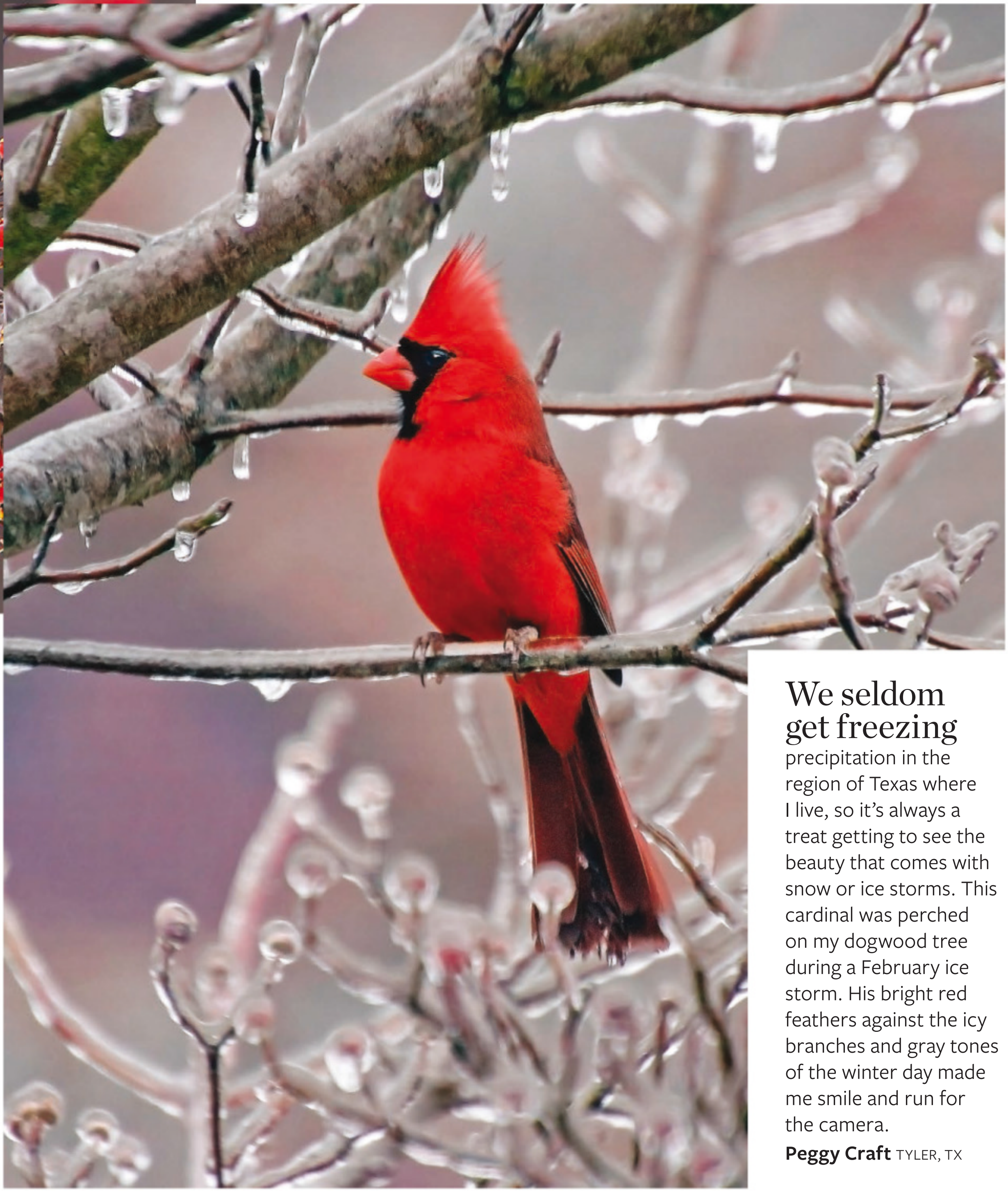
An American robin enjoyed a feast right in my backyard! This was one of my very first shots with my new 600 mm lens. The robins were busy feasting on berries from the tree beside the house, so I dashed outside and started snapping away. After plenty of near misses, this little birdie finally landed on a branch, berry in beak—just the shot I was hoping for!

Bethanne Mackey
CONCORD TOWNSHIP, OH

I took this picture in a cozy little town called Millers Mills in New York. I love this photo because it's bursting with color and perfectly captures the beauty of winter. This is a blue jay, one of my favorite birds. We feed the birds this time of year and enjoy seeing them every day.

Monte Loomis ILION, NY





We seldom get freezing precipitation in the region of Texas where I live, so it's always a treat getting to see the beauty that comes with snow or ice storms. This cardinal was perched on my dogwood tree during a February ice storm. His bright red feathers against the icy branches and gray tones of the winter day made me smile and run for the camera.

Peggy Craft TYLER, TX

BIZARRE BIRD FA

1. SPECIALIZED EYES

Black skimmers have an eye for detail: Their remarkable vertical pupils diminish the glare off the water (and sand) as they skim for fish.

ACTS

Get ready to be surprised! These 15 odd bits about birds are sure to blow your mind.

BY PURBITA SAHA

Black skimmers

1: BRIAN ZWIEBEL; 2: LARRY DITTO; 3: CHRISTINE HAINES; 4: RICHARD DAY/DAYBREAK IMAGERY

2. JOIN THE PACK

Why are Harris's hawks called wolves of the sky? They hunt in pairs or packs, teaming up to spot and run down prey in the wide-open desert.

3. TINY BUT MIGHTY

At ⅒ ounce, Calliope hummingbirds are the lightest birds in the United States—but also among the most fearless. They'll chase off larger hummingbird species and even hawks.

4. WATER WISE

When enemies approach, pied-billed grebes switch to submarine mode by compressing their feathers to decrease their buoyancy and sink below the water's surface.

Burrowing owl

5. CURB APPEAL

Burrowing owls have many cute quirks, but this one kind of stinks: They decorate their front doors with bison and cow poop to attract yummy dung beetles.

6. PERFECT TIMING

Birds have their own form of baby talk. For example, female Gambel's quails peep back and forth with their eggs to help the whole brood synchronize its hatch.

Female Gambel's quail with chicks

Downy woodpecker

7. HEAD IN THE GAME

Downy woodpeckers absorb loads of head trauma from hammering, so scientists have been studying their brains to learn more about degenerative diseases such as chronic traumatic encephalopathy and Alzheimer's.

Sandhill cranes

8. EVOLVING ITINERARY

Birds have been migrating for hundreds of thousands of years, but did they head north or south first? According to evolutionary scientists, they probably flew from colder regions down to the tropics, then made the return trip when the world around them warmed. This would explain why the majority of modern bird species in North America migrate every spring and fall.

5: LUIS DE ANDRES LAA/GETTY IMAGES; 6: RICHARD BUQUOI; 7: MIKE MATTHEWS; 8: DIANA ROBINSON PHOTOGRAPHY/GETTY IMAGES

Common ravens

9. FLOCKING TOGETHER

Common ravens sharpen their social skills from an early age. Juveniles wander around in cliques until they develop deeper bonds with roost mates and paramours.

Phainopepla

10. A BERRY BIG APPETITE

Phainopeplas may belong to a group called silky-flycatchers, but their desert digs are full of berries, which they scarf down at a competitive eater's pace (up to 1,100 in a day).

11. VERY VOCAL

Male American bitterns gulp air to inflate their throats to make funky booming sounds that can be heard from more than half a mile away.

9: BY MARESA PRYOR/DANITA DELIMONT ON OFFSET/SHUTTERSTOCK;
10: BILL GORUM, 11: MIRCEA COSTINA/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO (2)

12. AMERICAN PARROTS

Native to South America and popular as pets, monk parakeets that escaped from their cages have survived and thrived in parts of the United States, forming large wild colonies around many cities.

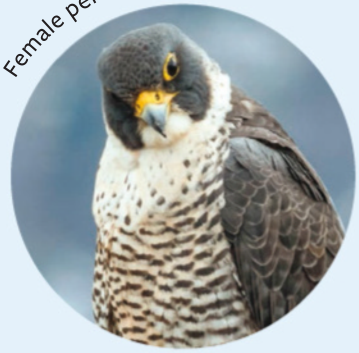
Monk parakeet

13. RULERS OF THE FEEDER

Feeder birds have a social hierarchy built on bulk, loudness and territoriality. Jays and woodpeckers rule the seed, while goldfinches and titmice often get relegated to crumbs.

Blue jays at feeder

Female peregrine falcon



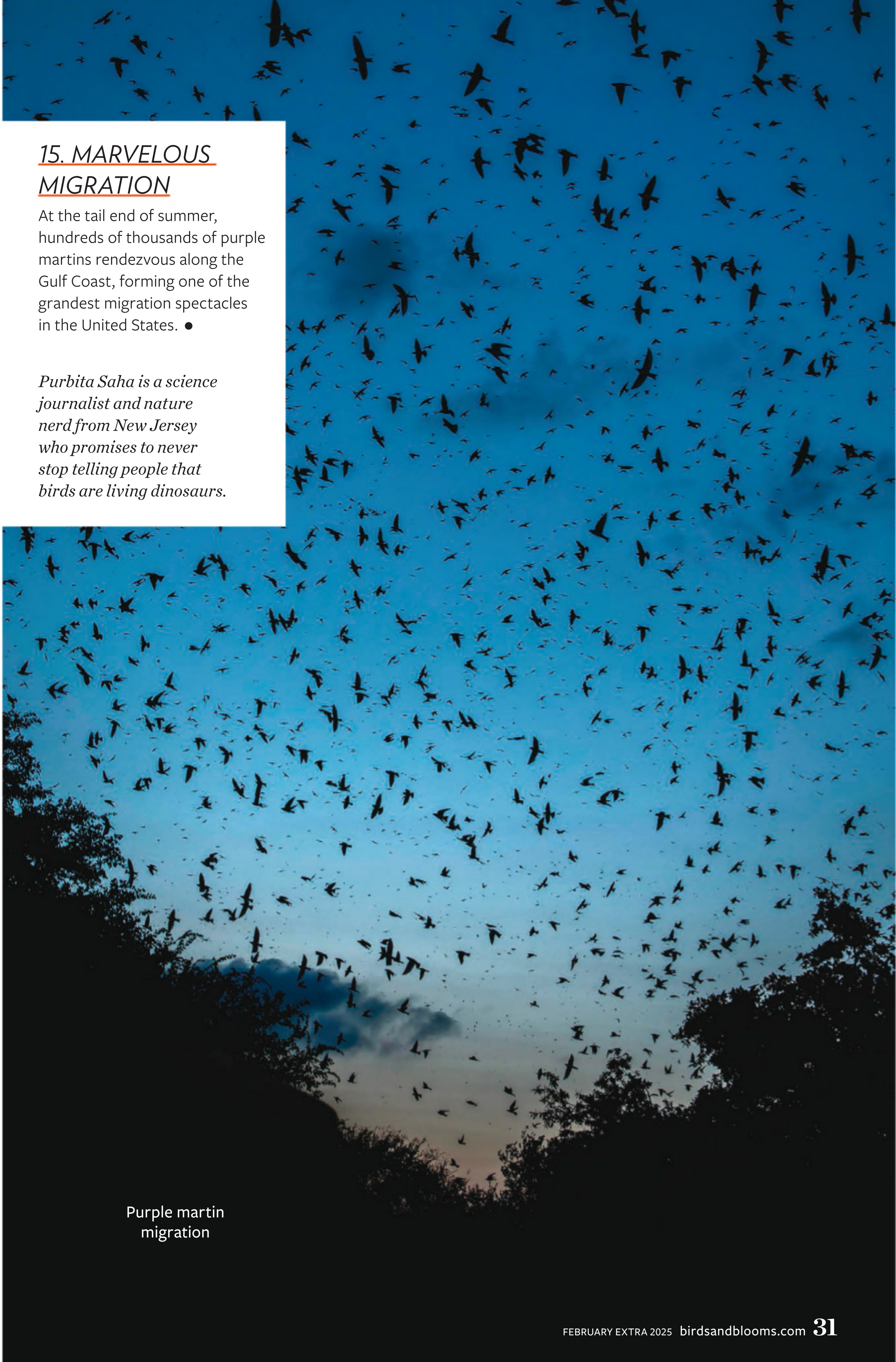
14. POWERFUL FEMALES

Female great horned owls, peregrine falcons and other raptors outsize their male counterparts. In fact, the male falcon is often called a tiercel, reflecting that it's about a third smaller than its mate.

15. MARVELOUS MIGRATION

At the tail end of summer, hundreds of thousands of purple martins rendezvous along the Gulf Coast, forming one of the grandest migration spectacles in the United States. ●

Purbita Saha is a science journalist and nature nerd from New Jersey who promises to never stop telling people that birds are living dinosaurs.



Purple martin migration

12: ICULIZARD/GETTY IMAGES; 13: TERRY VACHA/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 14: HARRY COLLINS/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; 15: STEPHANIE FRIEDMAN/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

FROM TOP: MARCIA STRAUB, GERRY BISHOP/SHUTTERSTOCK (2)

HOME, TWEET HOME

Create an all-inclusive habitat in your own backyard with plants that provide what birds need most

BY RACHAEL LISKA

Ruby-throated hummingbird at salvia

WHY GO SEARCHING FOR BIRDS WHEN YOU CAN BECKON THEM TO YOUR BACKYARD? With a bit of intention and a few plants that provide sustenance and shelter, you can turn almost any space into an oasis for your feathered friends. They may even take up residence themselves! “Many species of birds are in decline because of habitat loss, and the one place that we have some direct influence on habitat is in our yards,” says Emma Greig, project leader of FeederWatch at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Trumpet honeysuckle

SEASONS OF SNACKS
Birds feast on coneflower seeds in the fall, and insects and butterflies favor the summer blooms.

Zinnias

“By creating a bird-friendly garden, you are offering birds shelter, food and maybe even a place to nest and raise young,” Emma says.

Remember that diversity is key when planning a garden that gives big-time benefits to birds of all kinds. Incorporating a variety of plants to create a well-rounded ecosystem, especially one that provides year-round use, is the best way to give an all-encompassing habitat that includes everything your avian neighbors need to thrive. “There are lots of different species of birds that need different things: Some need seeds, some need insects, some need specific types of plants for nests,” Emma says. “By providing a variety of plants, you are making it more likely that you will meet the needs of a diverse set of species.”

Plants That Pack a Nutritious Punch

Birds spend a large part of their day foraging for food, including seeds, fruit, nectar and insects. Think like a hungry bird by considering plants that provide

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: PENPAK NGAMSATHAIN, BILL KOPLITZ,
WILLIAM KRUMPELMAN/GETTY IMAGES (3);

American goldfinch and coneflowers

a garden of good eats, especially when natural food sources are scarce and daylight hours for foraging dwindle in autumn and winter. “Plants sustain birds in so many ways: by providing food in the form of seeds and berries, and by being a home for insects that birds need to eat,” Emma says. “Without plants, most birds wouldn’t be able to survive. Pigeons might be an exception!”

During the growing season, low-maintenance perennials such as ornamental grasses, coneflower, coreopsis, sunflower and sedum attract insects that nesting songbirds love to savor. Keep the bird buffet going by allowing spent flowers to remain after the season wraps so seed heads can develop and sustain overwintering birds such as chickadees, goldfinches and titmice. And don’t forget about nectar and berry lovers! If you want to make local hummingbirds feel at home, adding nectar-rich plants with tube-shaped flowers like colorful cardinal flower and salvia, whether grown in pots or woven within the landscape, is a no-brainer.

Top:
Indigo bunting and sunflowers

Above:
Cardinal flower

STEFFEN HAUSER/BOTANIKFOTO/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Virginia creeper

CREEPING AND CLIMBING
A vigorous vine, Virginia creeper can be grown as a dense ground cover or for covering walls and trellises.

Beautyberry

Finally, many plants provide a bounty of berries that birds rely on, especially when colder weather comes to call. Winterberry, chokeberry, beautyberry, flowering dogwood and cotoneaster are all shrubs heavily laden with branches of nutrient-rich berries that grow to a modest size, making them suitable for even smaller gardens.

Take Cover with Trees and Shrubs

There are many benefits to providing sources of shelter for birds as habitat loss continues to impact migration habits and breeding sites. The dense foliage of trees and shrubs furnishes protection from predators during the day and cover for roosting at night. Tree branches provide stopover sites for migrating birds, lofty perches for birds to rest after foraging, and secure spots for nesting and raising broods of new bird generations. Consider native trees and shrubs, which often have multiple benefits, such as being larval host plants that supply protein for hatchlings. “One of my personal favorites is serviceberry because it provides shelter, nesting sites, berries and insects,” says Emma. “And it is a gorgeous tree to have in your yard.” Cedar waxwings, robins, catbirds and close to 30 other species of birds agree.

To create a backyard in which birds will feel safe and at home, mimic the multiple layers of growth found in natural settings. Trees and shrubs of varying heights and forms (and even native vines such as Virginia creeper and trumpet honeysuckle), when

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: KATHRYN8/GETTY IMAGES; STEFFEN HAUSER/BOTANIKFOTO, DANITA DELIMONT/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO (2); SHAUNL/GETTY IMAGES;

Cedar waxwing on serviceberry

planted together, provide a habitat that suits a variety of bird species. In winter, evergreens are especially important in northern climates as deciduous trees lose their leaves and birds become exposed to the elements. In addition, hollies provide year-round shelter and nesting sites, with the benefit of berries that ripen in fall and persist into winter. ●

American goldfinches, cedar waxwings and black-capped chickadees are a few of the local bird species freelance writer and editor Rachael Liska shares her Wisconsin backyard with.

MARIANNE PFEIL, MARIOLA ANNA S/SHUTTERSTOCK (2)

The Big Three

These powerhouse plants provide the ultimate trifecta for birds—food, cover and nesting sites!

Crabapple

Crabapple
Malus species, Zones 3 to 8

Robins, bluebirds, finches, cardinals and more flock to crabapples as they provide nectar and insects in spring and edible fruit in late fall. Its network of flower-flecked branches offers ideal cover and a beautiful place for birds to nest too.

Spruce

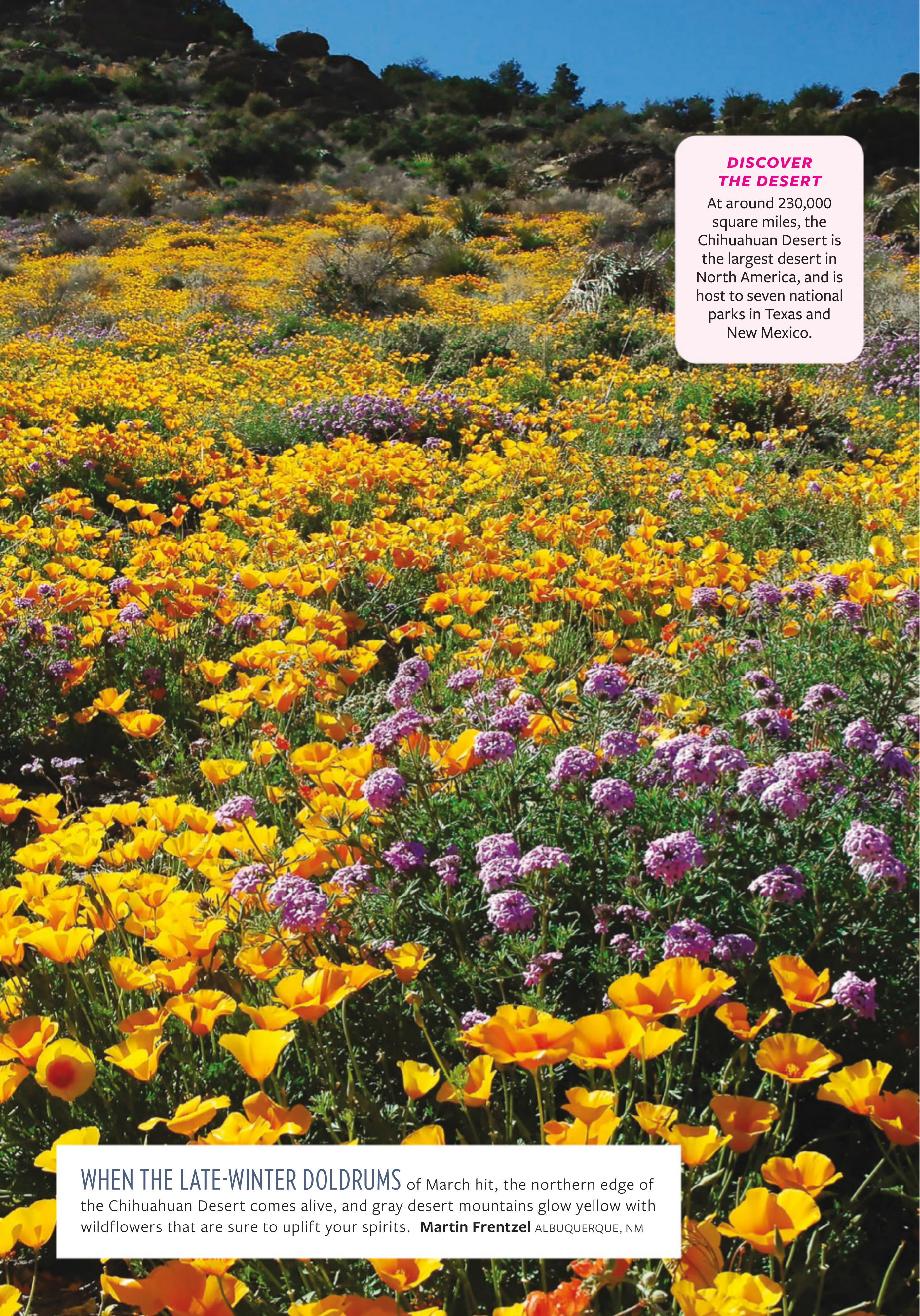
Spruce
Picea species, Zones 2 to 8

A rich food source, spruces offer insects for birds like warblers in early spring while supplying seed-bearing cones and fruits in fall and winter. Their thick evergreen needles provide excellent cover, and their dense branch structure make a perfect environment for nesting.

Common milkweed

Common milkweed
Asclepias syriaca L.,
Zones 3 to 8

Milkweed attracts a load of insects during the growing season that are great for birds, plus birds such as goldfinches and juncos eat the seeds in fall and winter. Its dense growing habit hides birds that like to forage on the ground, and species like the American goldfinch use the downy milkweed fiber to line their nests.



DISCOVER THE DESERT

At around 230,000 square miles, the Chihuahuan Desert is the largest desert in North America, and is host to seven national parks in Texas and New Mexico.

WHEN THE LATE-WINTER DOLDRUMS of March hit, the northern edge of the Chihuahuan Desert comes alive, and gray desert mountains glow yellow with wildflowers that are sure to uplift your spirits. **Martin Frentzel** ALBUQUERQUE, NM

THE RICH PINK BLOOMS OF THIS

Cherokee brave dogwood popped in the springtime sun in Lookout Mountain, Georgia. Pink is my favorite color, so I was drawn to this photogenic feast of color, background contrast and natural light. I was thrilled to capture the beauty of these blooms as they proudly signaled the beginning of spring.

Sandra Lemay APOPKA, FL

Floral Getaways

Readers share breathtaking adventures in blooming destinations

HOLLAND, MICHIGAN, HAS A TULIP FESTIVAL

every spring. I went there hoping to get a photo of a tulip that stood out from the others. After a thorough search, I found this purple tulip that popped from the surrounding white blooms. I titled this photo “Stand Out in a Crowd” because I like to think people don’t need to be afraid to be different.

Blair Celano SPRING LAKE, MI

THE BEST TIME OF YEAR TO VISIT THE

nation's capital is in April, during the peak weekend for the blooming of the cherry blossoms at the Tidal Basin. In this photo, the Washington Monument is lined up and framed with the beautiful blooming trees in the foreground.

Erik Dowell OCEAN CITY, MD

SPRING IN TEXAS HILL COUNTRY IS KNOWN

for wildflowers adorning roadsides, especially our state flower, the bluebonnet. I try to avoid the busiest of these tourist-attracting areas, so I took a little-known road that blessed me with an unspoiled bounty of bluebonnets and no other cars in sight!

Tiffany Hartmann
FREDERICKSBURG, TX

USE COURTESY AND COMMON SENSE

When visiting bluebonnet and other wildflower hot spots, remember to be respectful of property lines and the plants. Stay on trails, do not pick the flowers, and stay alert for the wildlife that lives among them, such as snakes and fire ants.

IN MARCH 2020, THE CALIFORNIA POPPIES

in the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve opened in the afternoon just one week into the COVID-19 pandemic, showing that the beauty of spring was still abundant and inspiring despite difficult times.

Melissa Finifrock
PALMDALE, CA

CAPTURED AT HOLLAND RIDGE FARM in Cream Ridge, New Jersey, this photo of vibrant tulips was taken using my Nikon D3100 and a Tokina 11-20mm lens. **Scott Miller** SCOTCH PLAINS, NJ

PRETTY PICKINGS

If you visit a farm where you can pick your own flowers, these tricks can help you make a great bouquet: Stick to a color scheme, pick ones with sturdy stems and buds that aren't fully open yet, and strip the leaves off in the field.

I PHOTOGRAPHED THESE RED AND WHITE TULIPS

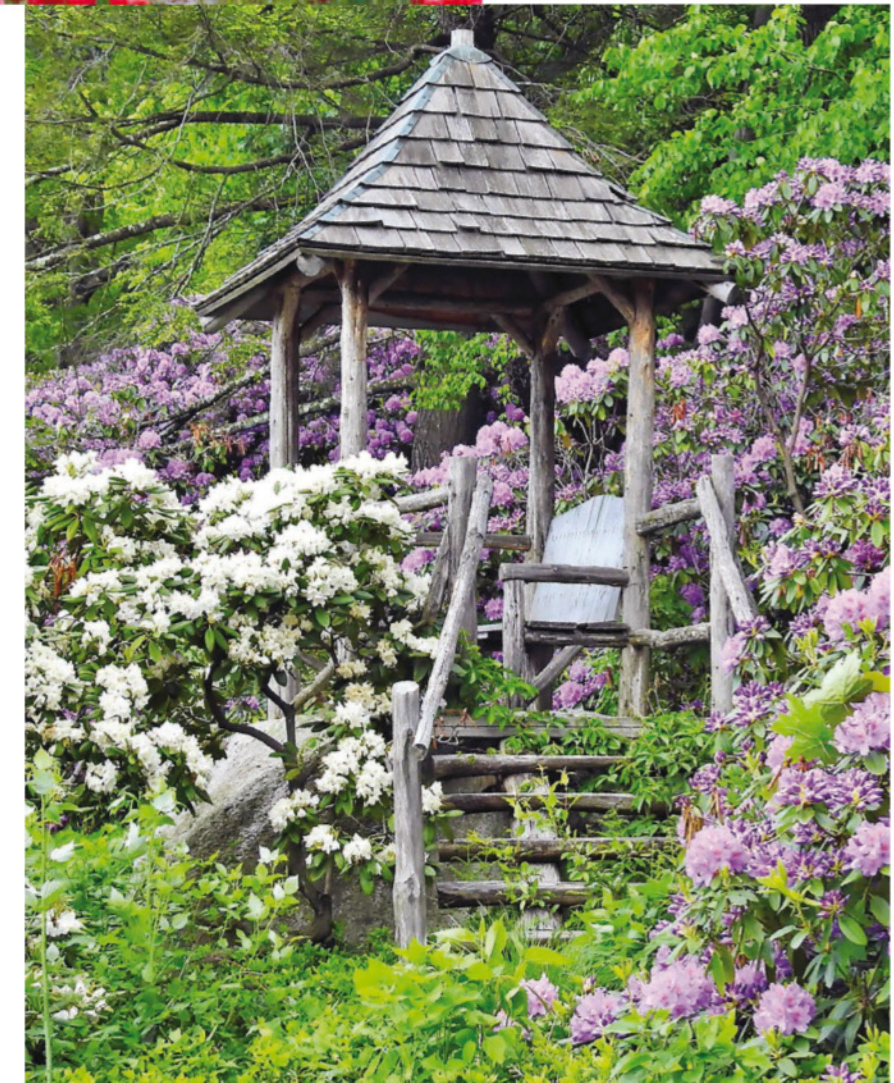
in the Skagit Valley of Washington, where these fields are essential to the community's economy and culture. The annual Skagit Valley Tulip Festival draws over a million people to the tulip farms in the spring to enjoy the simple beauty of a field carpeted with vibrant blooms.

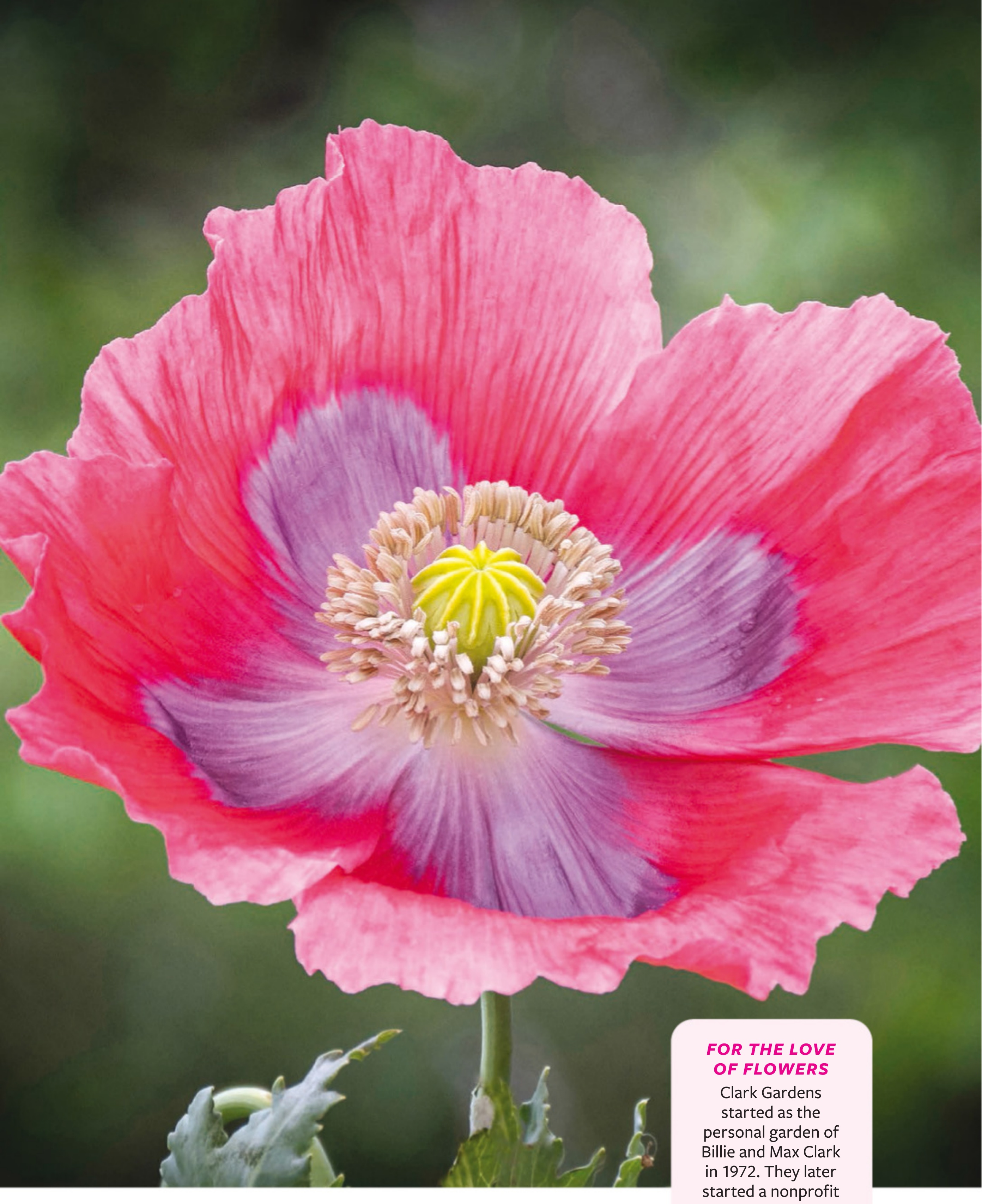
Adrianne Lauman
STANWOOD, WA

I LOOK FORWARD TO VISITING MOHONK

Mountain House with my aunts every year. It's a lovely historic resort on a glacial lake in New York's Hudson Valley. It has beautiful gardens to explore, and this rhododendron garden was off to the side and away from the formal garden, surrounding one of the summerhouses. I loved how gorgeous it was—overgrown and naturally beautiful.

Heather Ballard ACCORD, NY





FOR THE LOVE OF FLOWERS

Clark Gardens started as the personal garden of Billie and Max Clark in 1972. They later started a nonprofit organization and donated 143 acres of the garden to it, which opened to the public in 2000.

I HAD THE PLEASURE OF VISITING CLARK GARDENS near Weatherford, Texas. I was amazed by these big, beautiful poppies—the largest I have ever seen! They were all over the gardens, and they were stunning. **Ashley Campbell** CANYON, TX ●

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BACKYARD CHAT

Ask the Experts

Pros share insights on birding and gardening issues

Q Here in Washington state, the invasive barred owl is taking over the habitat of our northern spotted owl. The local wildlife authorities have decided to cull barred owls to protect the spotted owls. Why can't these invasive owls just be caught and returned to their habitat east of the Rockies instead of culling them?

Sharal Whitecliff HOQUIAM, WA

Kenn and Kimberly: Of course the idea of culling one owl to protect another is disturbing and controversial. But capturing the barred owls and moving them across the country would be extremely expensive, probably costing many thousands of dollars per individual. Some probably would die in transit, and releasing them back in their original eastern range could cause more problems: The best barred owl territories in the East are already occupied, and any translocated owls released there would most likely be driven out to marginal habitats where they might not survive. The barred owl and spotted owl conflict is a problem with no easy solutions.

Barred owl

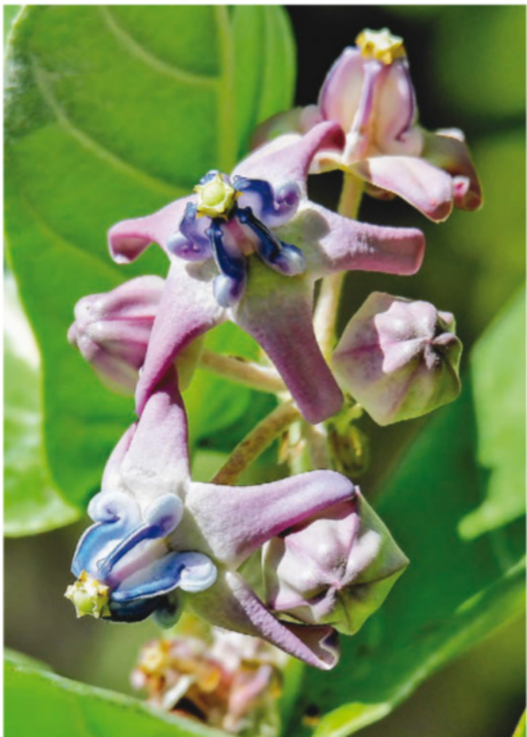
MIKE MATTHEWS

Q Large birds, such as robins and flickers, took over my bird baths and roosting areas last winter. I no longer see any other types of smaller birds that I used to see. Feeding birds is also discouraged in my area due to bear activity. Do you have any other ideas for how to get the small birds to return? **Curt Sinclair** TIJERAS, NM

Kenn and Kimberly: We know some people who have rigged up pulleys to hang feeders so high that bears can't reach them, with trays underneath to keep feed from accumulating on the ground, but that isn't always practical. Try putting out more bird baths and other water features so that large birds can't dominate them all. Planting for birds, if you have room, should also be effective: Native fruiting shrubs and native trees like oaks and junipers are good choices. Even in a small garden, you can plant native sunflowers and then let them go to seed, attracting finches and other birds without attracting bears.

Q I was walking around the Butterfly Garden at Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge in Boynton Beach, Florida, when I found this plant. Can you identify it for me? **Marilynne Strazzeri** DELRAY BEACH, FL

Melinda: This is crown flower (*Calotropis gigantea*), also known as giant milkweed. It is a native plant of Asia and tropical Africa. The flowers are pollinated by bees and butterflies, and the plant is a host plant for the monarch caterpillar. It is heat and drought tolerant, and hardy to Zones 9 to 11. There is concern with tropical milkweeds becoming invasive in areas where they are hardy. Recent research has also left scientists divided over the value and threat of growing tropical milkweeds in areas where it is hardy. On one hand, the evergreen varieties encourage monarchs to winter in southeastern North America instead of following their normal migration path, while the native milkweed plants die back in winter. And some studies have found that the presence of evergreen milkweed also puts the monarch at a higher risk for certain diseases. On the other hand, some scientists feel that the tropical varieties may help the monarchs regain some of their lost habitat, and that growing these may benefit the butterflies.



Q I recently moved from New York to Naples, Florida. What are your suggestions for attracting birds to my new area?

Jim Johansen NAPLES, FL

Kenn and Kimberly: Although many of the birds are different in your new home, the same overall principles work for attracting them. If you have room for native trees and shrubs, these will provide cover and nesting sites, while many birds will visit fruiting natives like wax myrtle and beautyberry. In feeders, serve quality food like black oil sunflower seeds for cardinals all year and white proso millet for painted buntings in winter. Hummingbirds are possible all year in Naples, so a garden with red tubular flowers and sugar-water feeders may keep them visiting through the winter. And water is always a great attractant for songbirds, especially with a small fountain or dripper to keep it moving.

Q This blue jay that comes to my feeder has a deformed beak. Is it OK?

Cynthia Raught ATAWISSA, PA

Kenn and Kimberly: Birds develop bill deformities from a variety of causes. These can be fatal, of course, if they prevent the bird from eating. But if the birds can adapt and figure out how to pick up their food and eat it, they may get by just fine. Some birds with deformed bills might live for years, even finding mates and successfully raising families.

Q I received a Venus flytrap for Valentine's Day. Do you have any tips on how to take care of this carnivorous plant?

Kara Bean GREEN BAY, WI

Melinda: Grow your plant in a sunny, draft-free location with temperatures of 65 to 70 degrees. Plant it in a 4-to-5-inch plastic pot filled with 2 parts sphagnum moss and 1 part coarse sand mix. Set the pot in a pan of distilled water or rainwater and maintain at least a 1-inch water level. Otherwise, water plants often enough to keep the planting mix damp but not soaking wet. No fertilizer is needed as carnivorous plants get needed nutrients from the insects they trap or from live mealworms, crickets and rehydrated blood worms that you can purchase at the pet store. My Venus flytrap helped manage my fungus gnats. Do not feed your plant meat, which can harm it, or insects larger than one-third the size of the trap, as these cannot be easily digested. As day length and the light intensity decrease in winter, your plant may go dormant for about three months. Move the plant to a cooler location, with temperatures of around 45 to 50 degrees, stop feeding and water sparingly. Remove black leaves as they appear and resume normal care in spring. You may be able to avoid dormancy by supplementing natural sunlight with artificial lights.

FROM LEFT: GJOHNSTONPHOTO, HELIVIDEO/GETTY IMAGES (2)

Female Anna's hummingbird

Q A hummingbird mom has reused a nest in my yard for three years. Last January, I saw her on the nest. How many broods can they have in a year? **Nancy Sherman** ORANGE, CA

Kenn and Kimberly: A hummingbird nesting in your area in January would be either an Anna's hummingbird or an Allen's hummingbird. Reuse of nests is an uncommon habit among hummers, but Anna's hummingbirds and especially Allen's hummingbirds are known to do this at times. In both these species, the females regularly raise two broods per season and may raise three in neighborhoods where gardens provide a reliable food source. There is even a report of a female Allen's hummingbird raising four broods—and a possible fifth—in one season.

Hibiscus rosa-sinensis

Q Should I cut back a hibiscus plant that's been hit by a frost?

Linda Howard LEXINGTON, SC

Melinda: If you are growing a hardy hibiscus like one of the cultivars of *Hibiscus coccineus* or *Hibiscus moscheutos,* consider leaving the plant. Some of the lower leaves may still be green and producing energy to help the plant thrive. Consider leaving the dormant stems standing in the garden for winter and do your pruning in spring. No matter when you prune, leave some of the stems intact to serve as a placeholder in the garden. Since these plants are late to emerge in spring, it is easy to accidentally damage them while doing a bit of spring cleanup. If you are growing the tropical hibiscus that is moved indoors for winter where it isn't hardy, wait to see what was damaged by the frost. The frost may have just damaged the leaves while the stems survived and will sprout new growth. Prune off just the parts of the stems that were damaged.

Q While out on a hike, I saw this beautiful bald eagle perched on a broken tree. Is it male or female, and how can you tell the difference?

Teri Quintal SUMMERFIELD, NC

Kenn and Kimberly: Bald eagles show a lot of variation in color pattern, but it's all related to age. Juveniles are dark brown all over at first, and they go through various stages, with different mixes of brown and white, as they mature. It takes four or five years for them to reach the fully white-headed, white-tailed look of adults. But males and females look the same, except for size. Females are larger on average, and you can see the difference if you see a mated pair perched close together.

FROM LEFT: SEN YANG, DOUGLAS PEEBLES/GETTY IMAGES (2)

MEET THE EXPERTS

Kimberly and Kenn Kaufman are the duo behind the Kaufman Field Guide *series. They speak and lead bird trips all over the world.*

Melinda Myers is a nationally known, award-winning garden expert, TV and radio host, and author of more than 20 books.

Striped Look-Alikes

Learn about these comparably striking swallowtails

SEMIFINALIST

2024 PHOTO CONTEST

▲ **I have a grandchild** with leukemia, and he loves butterflies. I wanted to send him a picture of one from Grandma's house. This two-tailed swallowtail seemed to know this photo was important because it drank from my Faassen's catmint long enough for me to get the perfect photo for him.

Linda Johnson
WALLA WALLA, WA

◀ **The Secret Garden at** Huntington Central Park is a wonderful place to visit. While there, I was admiring some beautiful cherry blossoms when this amazing western tiger swallowtail landed in the center of a perfect bloom. My dream came true when I captured the moment in this photo.

Linda McCann REDLANDS, CA

▲ **This eastern tiger** swallowtail was enjoying the nectar of a coneflower at a park near my home. I love this photo because it showcases the intricate details of the insect's body and wings, as well as its interaction with the coneflower. **Phil Gleissner** GRANGER, IN

Identifying Swallowtails

BONUS BUTTERFLY

Another look-alike, the Canadian tiger swallowtail has a range that overlaps with the eastern tiger swallowtail.

PHYSICAL DIFFERENCES

Wingspan: The eastern and two-tailed have a slightly larger wingspan than the western and Canadian.

Tails: The aptly named two-tailed has two tails on each of its hindwings.

Markings: Female eastern tigers sometimes display a dimorphic coloration of a darker black color that mimics the poisonous pipevine swallowtail.

RANGES

Since these butterflies are almost identical, the best way to distinguish them is by their location.

Eastern: From the Great Plains states eastward.

Western: From the Rocky Mountains westward.

Two-Tailed: From central Texas and central Nebraska westward.

Canadian: Central New England, New York, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana and northward.

What are your favorite signs of spring?

Readers recall the beloved sights, smells and sounds that signal the return of warmer days

My favorite is **seeing and hearing the earliest migrating birds**. At our house, it's the eastern phoebe, marked by its pumping tail and insistent *FEE-bee, FEE-bee* call, and then hearing the trills of the American toads in the evening. **Judy Roberts** GRAYTOWN, OH

Dandelions are my favorite. They may be considered a weed, but don't tell that to the honeybees who enjoy them. **Martha Russell** CARMEL, ME

The loons' return to our freshwater lakes and ponds is a welcome sight. They follow the ice out of the lake and reclaim their territory. **Debi Blank** BAR HARBOR, ME

When my *dwarf iris and grape hyacinth bloom,* I know spring is here.

Kathy Eppers ALEDO, TX

Grape hyacinth

American robin

I love watching for *the arrival of robins and sandhill cranes.* My mom, daughter and I have a friendly competition each year to see who can spot the first one.

Sue Gronholz
BEAVER DAM, WI

It may sound weird, but the **smell of mud** in the springtime just gives me hope that nicer (and warmer!) weather is around the corner.

Cheryl Beliveau HAMPTON, NH

YOUR TURN!

Q: What was your spark bird?

Share your answer with us at *birdsandblooms.com/submit.*

ROBIN: AMY LUTZ/SHUTTERSTOCK; DANDELION: DOLE08/GETTY IMAGES; GRAPE HYACINTH: JAN HETMAN/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

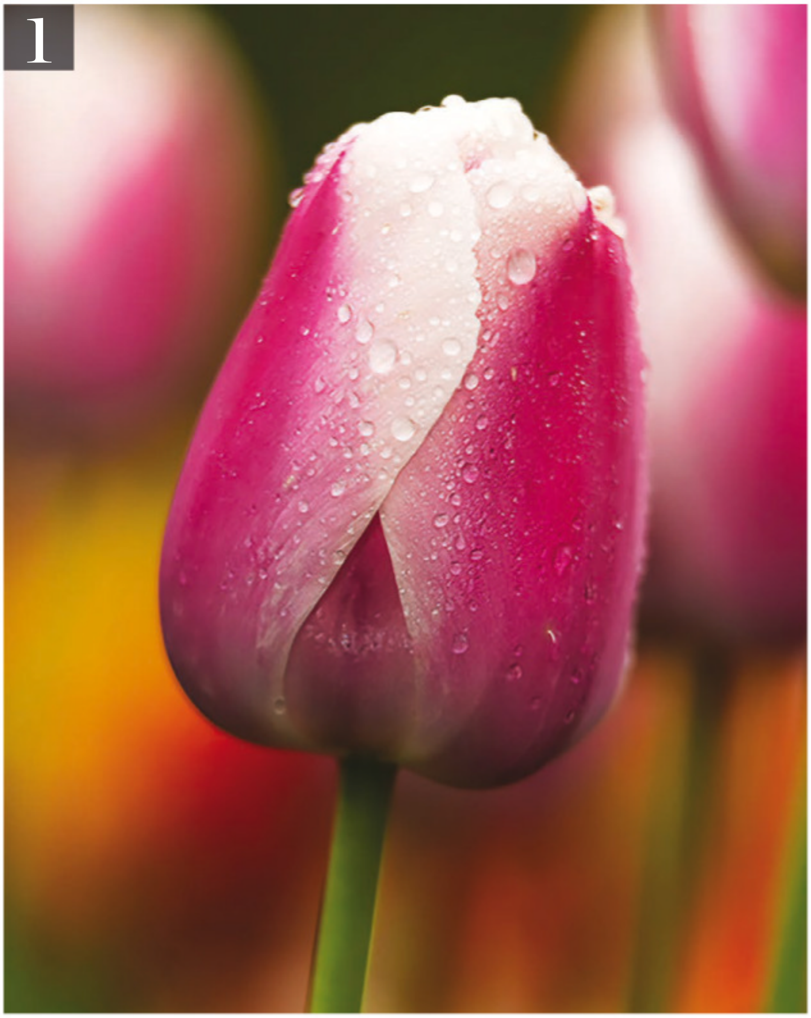
PHOTO QUIZ

The Icons of Spring

Can you identify these classic symbols of seasonal change?

answers on the bottom!

1



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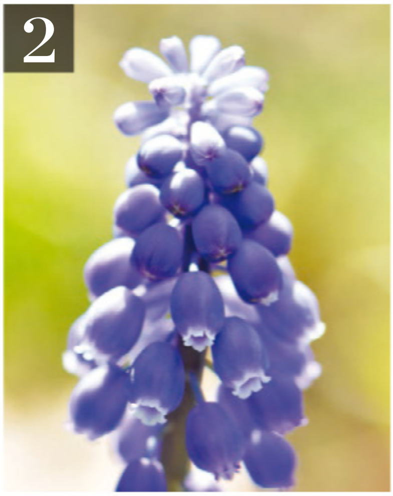

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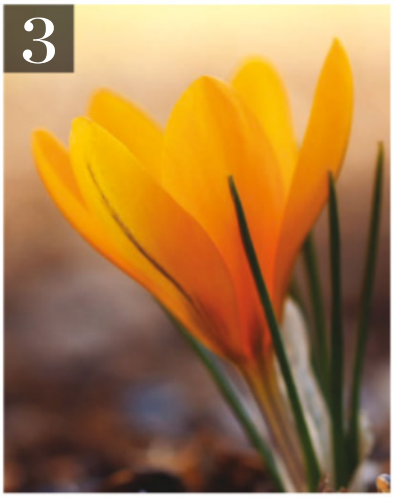

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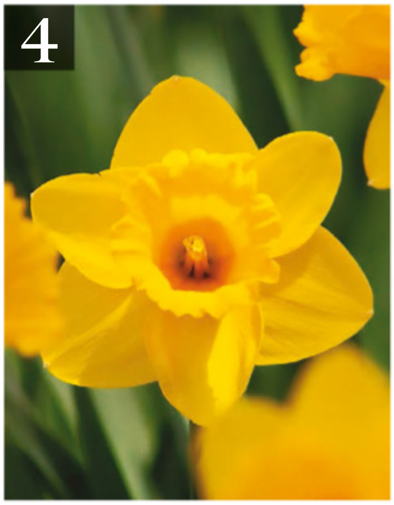

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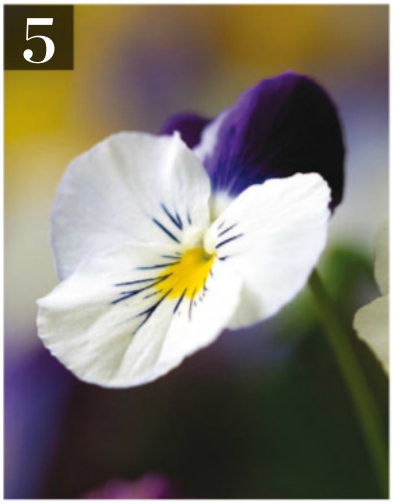

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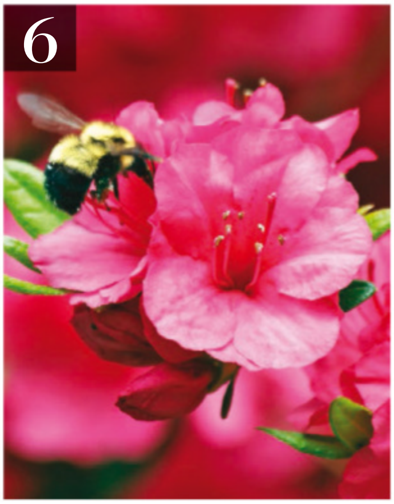

1: F.M. KEARNEY; 2: ROXANE MCWILLIAMS; 3: BARBARA GEIGER; 4: EMMA ACRI; 5: CORRINNE SMITH; 6: AIMEE GRACE

ANSWERS 1. TULIP 2. GRAPE HYACINTH 3. CROCUS 4. DAFFODIL 5. PANSY 6. AZALEA

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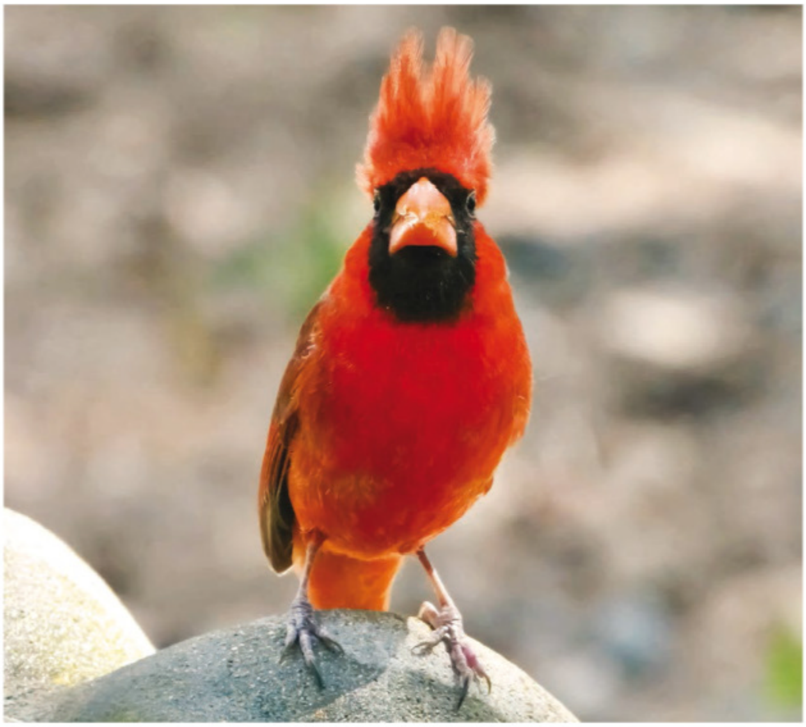

Caption This!

What is this fancy feathered cardinal thinking?

Joe Bob Hall of Holly Lake Ranch, Texas, took this photo of a male northern cardinal on a windy day, which he described as a bad hair day!

SHARE YOUR CAPTION

Your funny caption for this bird scene could appear in the next issue. Share your clever idea at *birdsandblooms.com/caption.*

LAST ISSUE'S WINNING CAPTION

"These worms are mine. Bug off!"

Caption submitted by William Pfeil of Marlette, Michigan.

SHARE YOUR BEST FUNNY NATURE PHOTOS!

Follow the Submission Guidelines on page 55.

BLUEBIRD: KATHY DIAMONTOPOULOS

Find the Hummingbird

In each issue, we hide a hummingbird like the one above left. Enter to win at *birdsandblooms.com/contests* if you find it. Winners get a one-year subscription to *Birds & Blooms*. In the November issue, we hid it on page 40.

HIDDEN OBJECT GUIDELINES

No purchase necessary to enter to win. Purchase will not improve your chances of winning. Sweepstakes is open to legal residents age 18 years or older of the U.S., its territories and possessions, or of Canada (excluding the Province of Quebec). Sweepstakes begins on Jan. 21, 2025, and ends on June 13, 2025. Visit *birdsandblooms.com/contests* for official rules. VOID WHERE PROHIBITED. Sweepstakes sponsored by RDA Enthusiast Brands, LLC.

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We love hearing from you—in fact, we couldn't publish this magazine without you!

To share stories, photos, backyard tips, questions for our experts or other content, use the form at *birdsandblooms.com/submit* and follow the online instructions.

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Field Editors

Find content from these field editors in this issue:

Judy Roberts, Kathy Eppers, Sue Gronholz

Volunteer nature lovers from across the U.S. and Canada belong to our *Birds & Blooms* Field Editor family. They share tips, stories, photos and happenings from their very own backyards, neighborhoods and regions.

Birds&Blooms

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DID YOU KNOW?

Tales of Quails

These quirky creatures are more than just cute, crested birds

BY CHRISTINE PETERSON

Male California quail

100

A covey of California quail can include up to 100 males, females and young.

Northern bobwhite quails

2,500,000

Some northern bobwhite quail fossils found in places as varied as Florida and Arizona are up to 2.5 million years old.

80

Large clutch sizes help sustain quail populations. Up to 80% of the population dies each year.

50

Montezuma quail don't cover much ground. They often stay in a small area, moving about 50 yards or less in a day.

40

Most quail can fly up to 40 mph and run up to 12 mph.

10,000

Mountain quail can live at 10,000 feet, and their babies leave the nest within hours of hatching.

1,000

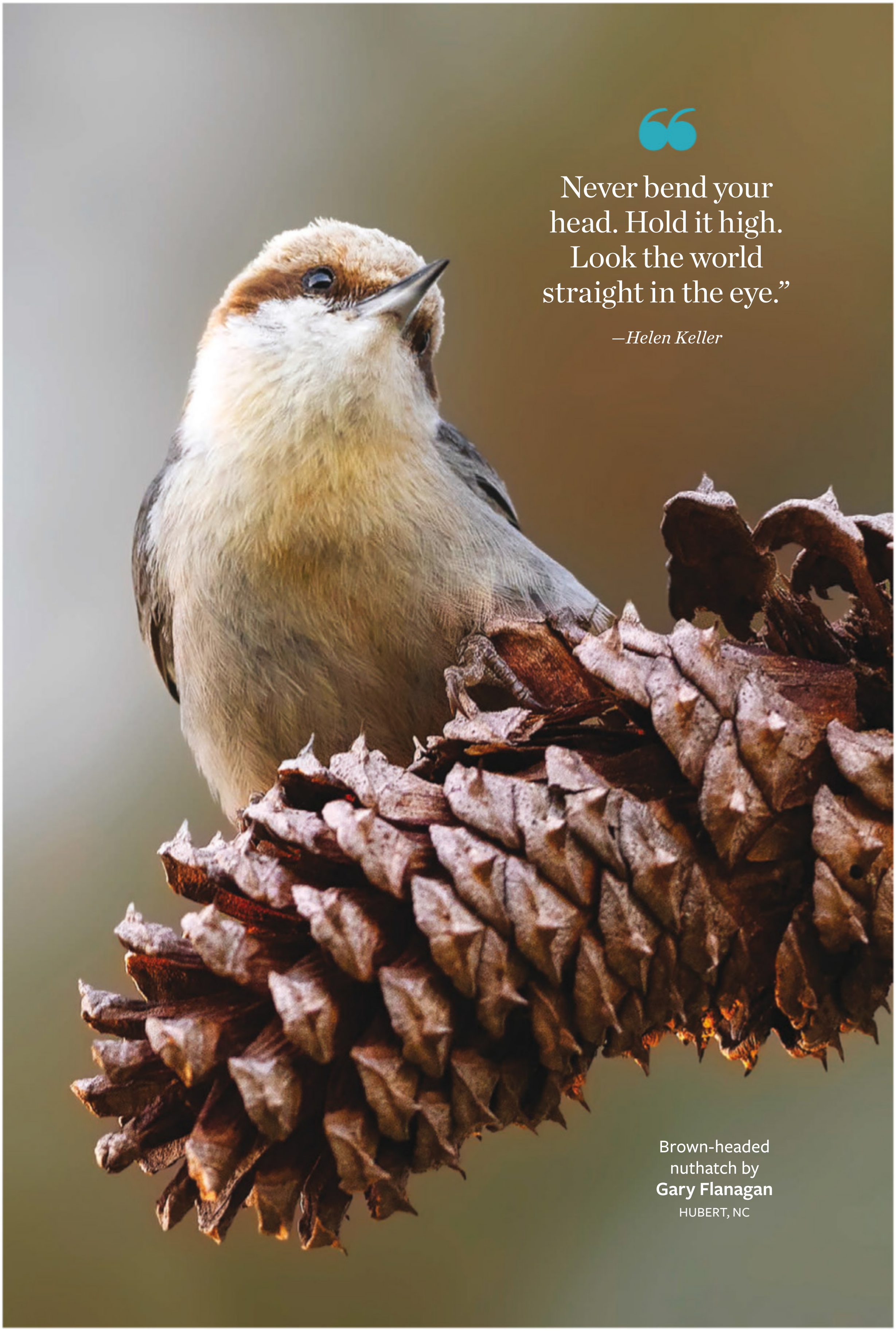
In 2024, Long Island students raised and reintroduced 1,000 bobwhite quail chicks into a local state park to combat tick infestations.

Female California quail

6

Of the West's six quail species, three are declining while one, the California quail, is increasing.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: WENDY/JEFF SPARKS/TORQUEMADA/GETTY IMAGES; DANITA DELIMONT/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; BAZILFOTO/GETTY IMAGES; AGAMI PHOTO AGENCY/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



> "Never bend your head. Hold it high. Look the world straight in the eye."
>
> *—Helen Keller*

Brown-headed nuthatch by **Gary Flanagan**
HUBERT, NC